peter **milligan** · chris **bachalo** · mark **pennington**

shade the changing man™

edge of vision

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SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN: EDGE OF VISION

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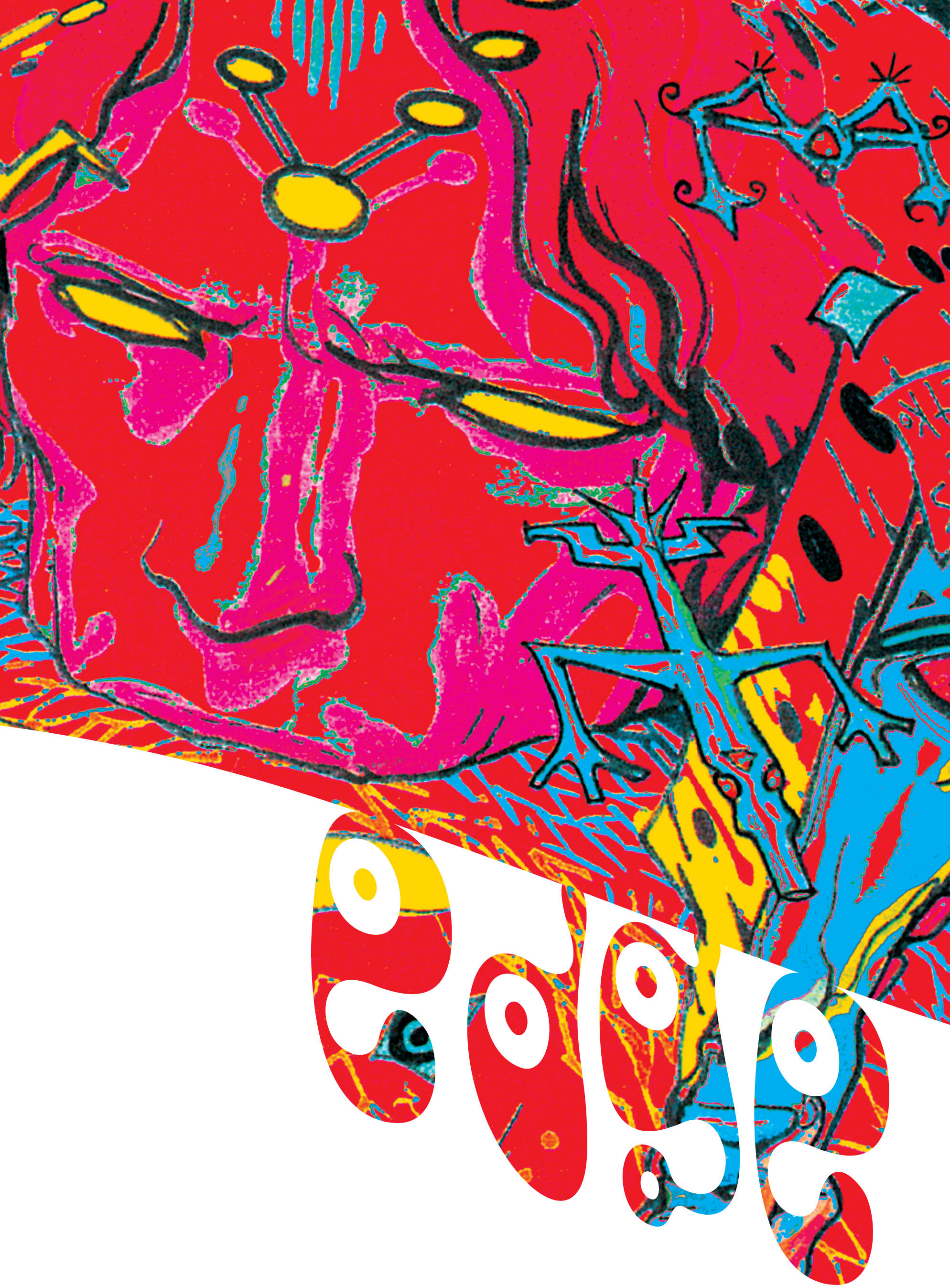
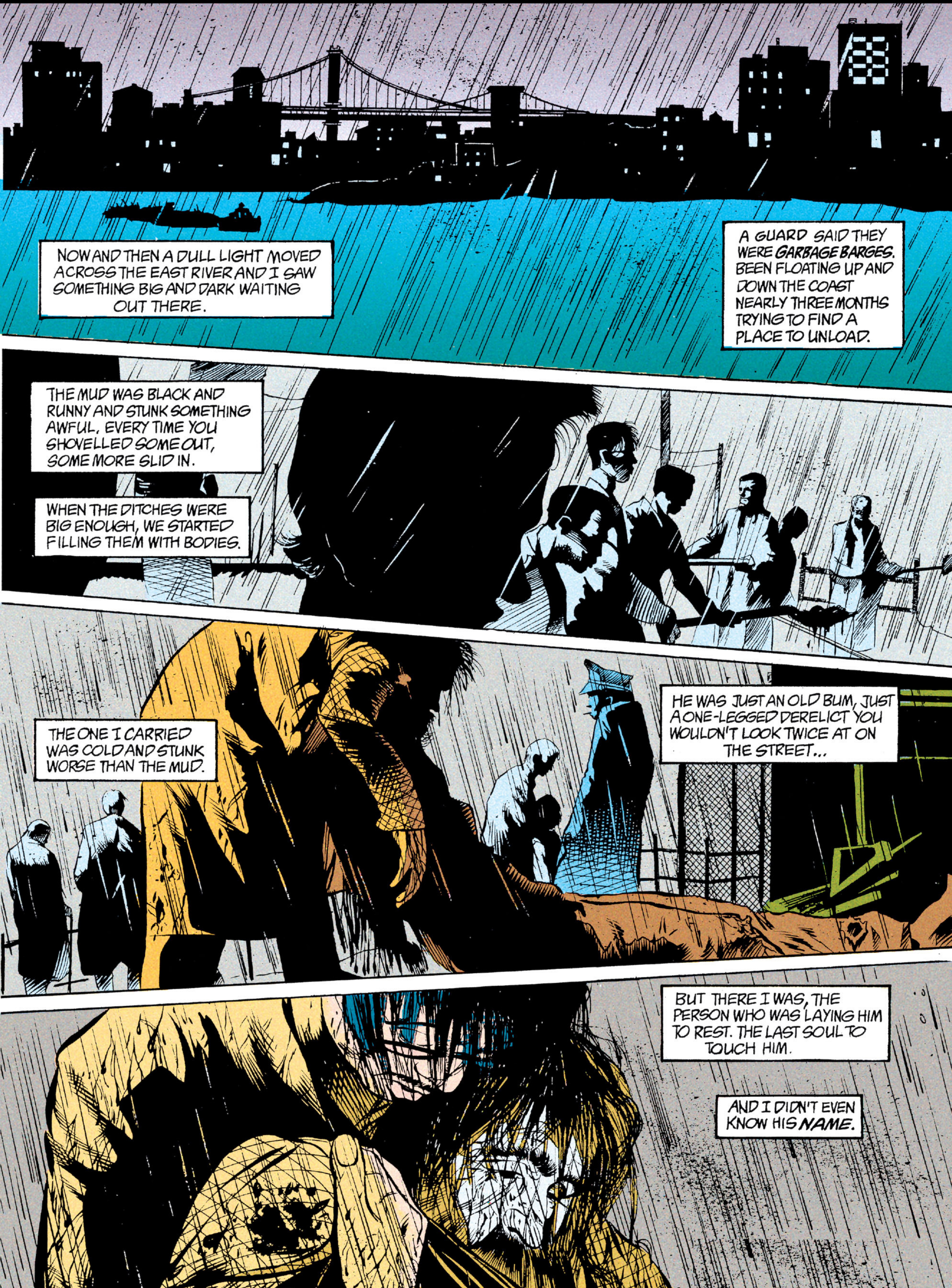


SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
DC
SHADE
THE CHANGING MAN
7
JAN 91
SHADE the Changing man
™
WRETCHED REFUSE!
by milligan, bachalo & pennington
McC ART HY-ISM

"THE WIND MOANS A SONG,
FOR THE DISCARDED
AND DISPLACED."


NOW AND THEN A DULL LIGHT MOVED ACROSS THE EAST RIVER AND I SAW SOMETHING BIG AND DARK WAITING OUT THERE.
A GUARD SAID THEY WERE *GARBAGE BARGES*. BEEN FLOATING UP AND DOWN THE COAST NEARLY THREE MONTHS TRYING TO FIND A PLACE TO UNLOAD.
THE MUD WAS BLACK AND RUNNY AND STUNK SOMETHING AWFUL. EVERY TIME YOU SHOVELLED SOME OUT, SOME MORE SLID IN.
WHEN THE DITCHES WERE BIG ENOUGH, WE STARTED FILLING THEM WITH BODIES.
THE ONE I CARRIED WAS COLD AND STUNK WORSE THAN THE MUD.
HE WAS JUST AN OLD BUM, JUST A ONE-LEGGED DERELICT YOU WOULDN'T LOOK TWICE AT ON THE STREET...
BUT THERE I WAS, THE PERSON WHO WAS LAYING HIM TO REST. THE LAST SOUL TO TOUCH HIM.
AND I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HIS *NAME*.

THE NAMELESS

PETER MILLIGAN, WRITER
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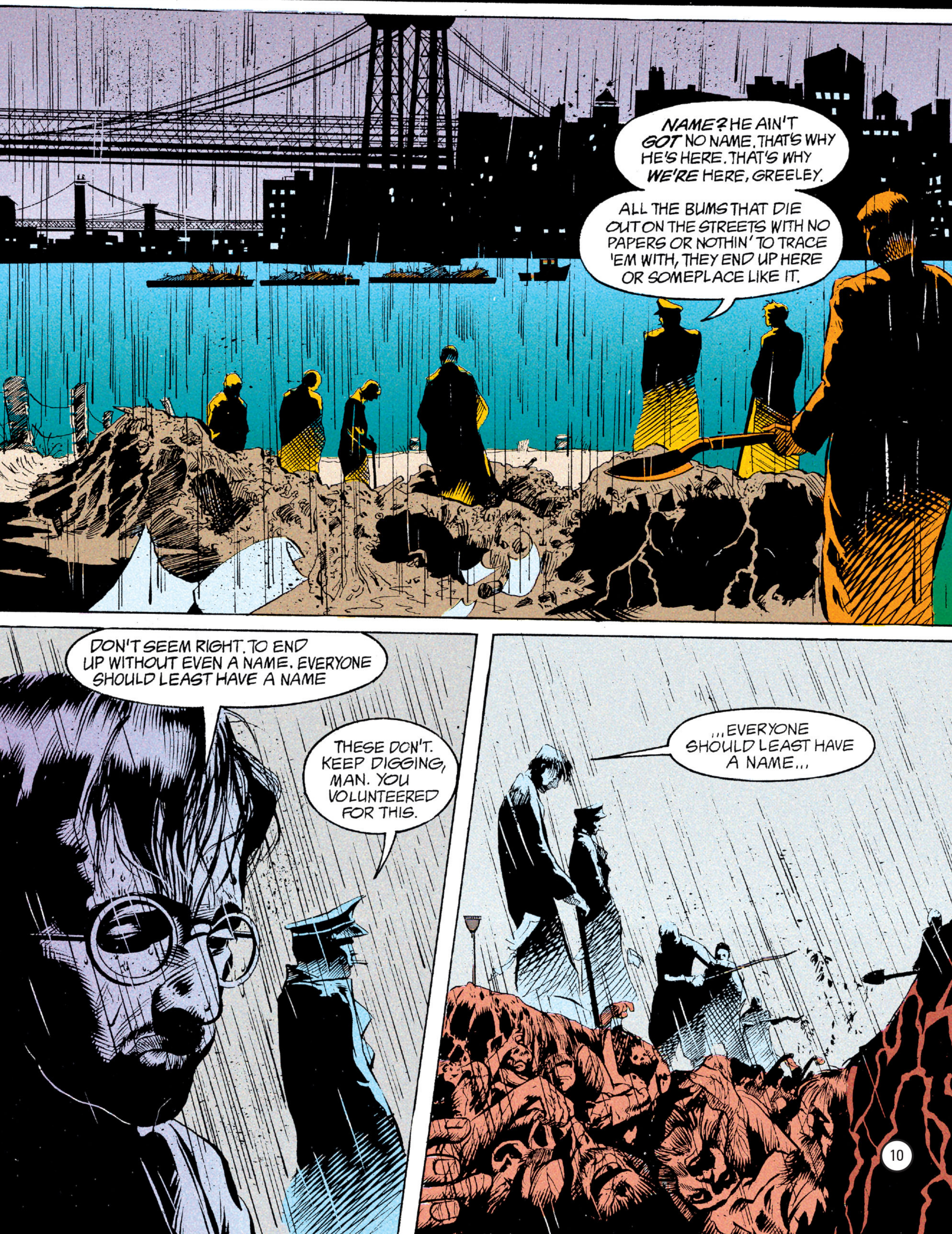

NAME? HE AIN'T GOT NO NAME. THAT'S WHY HE'S HERE. THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE, GREELEY.
ALL THE BUMS THAT DIE OUT ON THE STREETS WITH NO PAPERS OR NOTHIN' TO TRACE 'EM WITH, THEY END UP HERE OR SOMEPLACE LIKE IT.
DON'T SEEM RIGHT. TO END UP WITHOUT EVEN A NAME. EVERYONE SHOULD LEAST HAVE A NAME
THESE DON'T. KEEP DIGGING, MAN. YOU VOLUNTEERED FOR THIS.
...EVERYONE SHOULD LEAST HAVE A NAME...

BACK IN MY CELL I TRY TO SLEEP BUT CAN'T STOP SMELLING THE RIVER AND THE MUD AND THE OLD MAN...
BURIED LIKE POISONED WASTE IN THE GROUND. THROWN INTO A DITCH.
AND I IMAGINE HIS MOTHER HOLDING HIM WHEN HE WAS BORN. HOLDING HIS SOFTNESS AND WARMTH, SMILING AT HIM...
HOW WOULD SHE HAVE FELT IF SHE'D KNOWN HE'D END UP BURIED WITHOUT A NAME?...
WHAT ABOUT MY OWN MOTHER? SHE WASN'T SO BAD. DID HER BEST, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES...
AND LOOK AT ME NOW, THIRTY-ONE AND ALREADY FINISHED, WHOLE LIFE WASTED BEFORE IT'S BEGUN...
TRIED ROBBING A GROCERY STORE WITH A TOY GUN. I WAS SO HIGH I FELL OVER AND WOKE UP IN A CELL.
MAMA GAVE ME LIFE AND I THREW IT AWAY. DIDN'T EVEN CARE THAT I'D THROWN IT AWAY, DIDN'T EVEN SEEM LIKE SOMETHING WORTH HAVING.
I TURN AND TURN BUT CAN'T STOP THINKING, CAN'T STOP SEEING HIM THERE IN THE MUD...
CAN'T STOP THE VOICE THAT SAYS OVER AND OVER...
"THAT'LL BE YOU SOME DAY, GREELEY."
"THAT'LL BE YOU."

AND I HEAR THE BARGES, GROANING AS THE EAST RIVER ROLLS BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS WITH A SLUGGISH SOUND LIKE...
...NAMELESS... NAMELESS... NAMELESS...
I SIT UP, ROLL ROUND, LIE DOWN. IT'S NO GOOD. MY MIND WON'T STAY INSIDE MY HEAD...
MY MIND IS LIKE A BARGE IN THE DARK, WAITING FOR A PLACE TO DUMP ITS GARBAGE.
MY MIND IS MOVING ACROSS THE FILTHY MUD GRAVES LIKE A SMELL, LIKE THE WIND...
LIKE SQUALLS OF LITTER ON THE WIND...
AND THE WIND MOANS A SONG, FOR THE DISPLACED AND DISCARDED...
A SONG FOR THE RUBBISH, THE JUNK, THE TRASH...
A SONG FOR THE THROWN-AWAY, THE WASTE, THE CITY'S CRUSHED CAST-OFFS, FOR THE HOPELESS AND HOMELESS AND NAMELESS...
AND THE WIND IS MY MIND AND BLOWS THROUGH MY CHILDREN AND IT TEACHES MY CHILDREN ITS SONG...

AND OUT ON THE SULLEN EAST RIVER I SQUAT. AND I WATCH THE BRIGHT CITY WITH ITS CANYONS AND GUTTERS.
AND THE WIND STIRS MY BODY.
AND MY SONG STIRS MY SOUL.
AND THE RIVER IS COLD, BUT NOT AS COLD AS MY HEART.
AND I SING FOR THE FILTH IN THE STREET AND THE DREGS IN THE ALLEY...
AND I SAY BRING YOUR GARBAGE-HEARTS TO ME, CHILDREN...
C'MON, HEIDI, THEREZ A GOOD GIRL...
I WILL GIVE THEM A HOME...
C'MON, DON'T BE SO GODDAMN FRIGID. YOU AIN'T NEVER MINDED BEFORE, NOW HAVE YOUS?
NAMELESS + ME!
GET OFF ME, I AIN'T IN THE MOOD. I GOTTA GO SEE TO MY BABY.

SINZE WHEN YOU HAD *MOODS*, HUH? AN' HOW MANY TIME... THERE, THAZ BETTER, I'LL JUSS...
YOU AIN'T GOT NO BABY. THEY TOOK YOUR BABY AWAY...
MAYBE WE CAN MAKE US A NEW BABY, HEIDI, HUHH, HEIDI?
NO, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?...
THASS... THASS BETTER, YOU JUSS LIE STILL WHILE I...
I SING FOR THE USED-UP AND BOOZED-UP...
HUHH? WHOZZ THA? I'LL KILL YOUS BASTARDS I'LL...
FOR THE TRASH THAT'S THROWN OUT AND FORGOTTEN...
OH JESUS...
FOR THE STINKING SHIT OF THE AMERICAN DREAM...
I SING THE CHANT OF THE NAMELESS...
THE SONG OF THE RUBBISH UPRISING...

THAT POOR GUY. THE MONEY WE GAVE HIM WILL HAVE DISAPPEARED BY NOW...
SAVE YOUR CONSCIENCE, HE WAS A SECOND-HAND CAR DEALER.
LIKE SOME MORE?
BETTER NOT. DON'T KNOW WHAT MIGHT *ESCAPE* IF I GET DRUNK.
I REALLY WISH I COULD TURN THIS POWER OF MADNESS THING ON AND OFF. I HATE FEELING THAT I'VE GOT TO BE *CAREFUL* ALL THE TIME.
MAYBE *YOU* SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL, TOO. THE DRINKING...
AWW, PLEASE, SHADE. NO LECTURES. I DON'T DRINK *THAT* MUCH. I HAVEN'T GOT A *PROBLEM* OR ANYTHING...
IT JUST HELPS ME RELAX. AND SLEEP. I'LL START CUTTING DOWN SOON.
CAN YOU HOLD ME, PLEASE? THAT'S NICE. Y'KNOW, I'M AN *ANGEL* COMPARED TO HOW I WAS. I USED TO TAKE *EVERYTHING* REAL CRAZY.
HEY, DON'T THE WAVES SOUND LOVELY AT NIGHT?
BEEP BEEP
UHH? WHAT'S...
BEEP

MY GOD, WHERE...?
NEW YORK!?! HOW CAN WE BE IN NEW YORK?
THE MADNESS STREAM MUST'VE TAKEN US IN OUR SLEEP. CAN'T LEAVE US ALONE FOR ONE DAMN NIGHT!
WE GOTTA GET A HOTEL OR SOMETHING. WHERE DO YOU PARK AROUND HERE?
IN MIDTOWN MANHATTAN? YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING...
PHUGGHH!
IT'S STICKING TO ME! GET IT OFF, SHADE, GET IT...
YOU OKAY?
WHAT? YEAH... YEAH, I GUESS SO...
JEEZ, EVEN THE LITTER IN NEW YORK'S GETTING PUSHY.

THE WIND IS OUR SONG AND IT BLOWS THE SPIRIT OF GARBAGE THROUGH US.
THE SONG OF THE NAMELESS SPEAKS TO YOU ALL, LIFTS YOU, MOVES YOU...
STIRS YOU TO *ACTION*!
WE HAVE LAIN IN THE TRASHCANS TOO LONG!

THEY BURIED HIM WITHOUT A NAME. THEY BURY US ALL, THROW US AWAY, HURL US INTO DITCHES OR DUMP US ON BARGES AND TRY TO FORGET US. BUT NOW THE TRASH IS RETURNING...
THE NAMELESS ARE RISING!
THE NAMELESS ARE RISING, LIKE THE DEAD FROM THEIR GRAVES...
MY NOSTRILS ARE **BURNING** WITH THE STENCH OF ***WASTE***.
I MOVE THROUGH THE CITY ALONG THE CHANNELS OF THE DISCARDED, THE DISPOSSESSED, THE NEVER-POSSESSED.
I'M SICK OF THE WASTE! SICK OF THE SMELL OF THE RUBBISH DUMP!
GUARD! GUARD, GEMME OUTA HERE!
THIS GUY'S FLIPPIN' OUT!
NAMELESS
WE'RE NOT MERRY OR FUNNY OR QUAINT. NOT GENTLEMEN OF THE ROAD. NOT HAPPY HOBOS.
WE'RE CRAZY PIECES OF HUMAN GARBAGE TEETERING ON CURBS BECAUSE THE HOSPITALS THREW US OUT...
NAMELESS
WE'RE NAMELESS OLD MEN IN SRO HOTELS. WE'RE JUNKIES, SCHIZOS, PARANOIDS, DISTURBED, DISTURBING, MOTHERS, FATHERS, CHILDREN...
WE'VE BEEN KNOCKED DOWN BY AMERICA. A HIT AND RUN. LEFT IN THE GUTTER.
I AM GARBAGE. I HELD A TOY GUN BUT THE STORE OWNER SMELLED THE TRASH ON MY BREATH...
...AND KNEW HE COULD JUST SWEEP ME UP AND THROW ME OUT WITH THE ROTTEN FRUIT AND SOGGY BOXES.

KIM'S GROCERY
I WILL SET IT FREE...
SMELL MY GARBAGE BREATH. THE BREATH OF THE NAMELESS. BURIED WITHOUT A NAME...
...BUT I CAN SEE THE GARBAGE LURKING IN EVERYONE, THE SPECK OF TRASH THAT LIES AT THE HEART OF YOU ALL...
ALL THE WASTE OF YOUR LIFE AND ALL THE LIFE YOU WASTED...
THERE'S A ONE-LEGGED NAMELESS DERELICT BURIED WITHIN US ALL...
NAMELESS... NAMELESS...
...NAMELESS...

AND NOW A GLORIOUS SANDSTORM OF GARBAGE, LIKE AN EASTER PARADE, DANCES DOWN FIFTH AVENUE...
YOU THREW US AWAY, YOU RELEGATED US TO NAMELESS OBLIVION...
ONE WAY
AND ACROSS THE BAY THE STATUE OF LIBERTY IS SWATHED IN A FLY-COATED, JUNKTIP COFFIN-SHEET, HIDING ITS FACE AND ITS SHAME...
FOR THE NAMELESS KNOW NO LIBERTY. THERE'S NO LIBERTY IN TRASHCANS...
I MOVE LIKE TRASH ON THE WIND. OUTSIDE A FANCY RESTAURANT. LOOK AT THEM. SO SMUG, SO SURE, SO CONFIDENT IN THEIR WARM, WELL-LIT WORLD...
COCOONED BY MONEY AND LUCK...
666
IT CAN SHATTER! I WILL MAKE IT SHATTER!
IT COULD HAVE BEEN YOU. IT COULD HAVE BEEN YOU...
NOW IT IS YOU.

JESUS, SHADE WHAT A STINK. WHERE'RE WE, GOING, ANYWAY?
THE EYE OF THE STORM, I GUESS. THE CITY'S BEING TURNED INTO ONE BIG TRASH HEAP...
MAYBE YOU'D BETTER STAY HERE. KATHY. I'LL MEET YOU BACK HERE WHEN I'M THROUGH...
NO, I'LL COME WITH YOU. DON'T WANNA GET SEPARATED OR ANYTH--
I SING FOR THE NAMELESS!
AAAH!
BE IN MANHATTAN IN THIRTY MINUTES, MR. STRINGER.
WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?
THERE'S MORE RUBBISH. *MOUNTAINS* OF IT. STILL NO SIGN OF *SHADE*, THOUGH.
ARE YOU SURE HE COULD'VE GOTTEN THERE YET? LAST TRACE OF HIM WAS IN *HOLLYWOOD*. WE'VE HAD THE AIRLINES CHECKED.
IF HE LEFT L.A., IT WAS BY ROAD.
I THINK SHADE'S ROADS ARE DIFFERENT FROM OURS, CONNOR.
I THINK HIS ROADS AREN'T MEASURED BY MILES...

I'M CRYING. I'M HURTING. MY PAIN'S DEEPER THAN THE EAST RIVER...
I DROPPED HIM INTO THE DITCH LIKE THEY DROP THEIR OTHER GARBAGE INTO THE CANS.
KATHY!... KATHY, WHERE ARE YOU?
HIS MOTHER HELD HIM, LOVED HIM, LET HIM GO...
I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING, SHADE...SHADE, IS THAT YOU?
I CAN SEE THE GARBAGE IN ALL OF YOU, THE JUNK POTENTIAL...
SHAAIIEEEE!
THE WORM OF TRASH...
UHH... UHHH... HHH...

HEAD. SHIT. MY HEAD. I'M SICK, I...
I NEED... A DRINK... WHERE'S THE GODDAMN...
OH. HERE'SSHH IS...
SHHH... 'SEMPTY. BITCH'SEMPTY...
NO PROBLEM... I JUSSH DRINK... NO PROBLEM...
READ A PAMPHLET ONE TIME... ABOUT ALCOL... ALCOLHO... DRINK...
HEY... HEY, MISTER...
BUY ME...
...A... DRINK...?
KATHY! WHERE'D YOU GO?
WHAT DID YOU *DO* WITH HER, HUH? YOU OR THE AMERICAN SCREAM OR WHOEVER, WHAT DID YOU--
THE WASTE! ALL THE *WASTE!*
MY GOD THE WASTE!
I'M SINKING... DESPAIR... GIVE UP... MELLU, MY POOR DEAD BODY, THE KILLER INSIDE ME...
NO. FIGHT. DON'T DIE, FIGHT. KATHY. WHERE'S KATHY...

RUSH OF STALE AIR, SMELL OF PISS-HARDENED TROUSERS AND MAGGOTY MEAT AS I HIT THE RUBBISH MAN...
...A DESPERATE, HOLLOW PAIN FOR AN OLD BUM IN A DITCH, AS THE GARBAGE ENFOLDS ME...
I KICK, FIGHT, TRY TO BURN OR FREEZE MY WAY OUT BUT JUST FEEL MYSELF SUCKED DEEPER...
...AS A DROWNING MAN MIGHT HASTEN HIS DESCENT BY STRUGGLING...
SO I STOP STRUGGLING. REALIZE THIS IS THE ONLY WAY. FROM INSIDE.
I HEAR VOICES, A SONG, A SONG FOR THE DISCARDED, THE MAGGOT-RIDDEN, THE NAMELESS...
I GO DEEPER, DESCEND, INTO THE EMPTY NAMELESS HEART OF THE CREATURE...
UP AHEAD, SOMETHING FORMING. I'M NOT MOVING THROUGH TIME AND SPACE. LIKE THE ANIMATING MIND THAT'S DOING ALL THIS...
I AM MOVING THROUGH THE CONDUITS OF GARBAGE...
HE SLID INTO THE MUDDY DITCH LIKE A PIECE OF OLD MEAT INTO A TRASHCAN. TO DIE PENNILESS IS ONE THING, BUT TO DIE NAMELESS...!

THE ANIMATING MIND. THE SINGER OF THE GARBAGE SONG. TOUCHED BY ***THE AMERICAN SCREAM...***
HIS SONG GIVEN ***FLESH*** BY THE AMERICAN SCREAM...
I FEEL A SURGE OF OBSESSIVE HORROR. SMELL A RIVER...
FEEL MYSELF MOVING. THE PLACE IS NOT HERE. THE PLACE I MUST GO TO IS...
...A LONELY SHORE BY A DARK RIVER...
I BEGIN TO SEE GHOSTS BURYING THE DEAD IN ROUGH GRAVES...
THE MAN IN THE CELL...
...THE NAMELESS VAGRANT...
EMPTY BARGES GROAN ACROSS THE RIVER AS I KNEEL AND TOUCH THE GRAVE...
...AND THE BODY OF THE MAN BURIED IN IT...

TRY TO DRINK OF THE GRAVE, DRINK OF THE MAN. A KIND OF INSANE **PSYCHOMETRY**.
DIVINATION OF FACTS CONCERNING AN OBJECT BY CONTACT WITH IT...
BUT WILL IT WORK? WILL IT...
I FEEL MY SOUL SINK, DISSIPATE... MY BEING DISPERSE, BECOMING SUBMERGED BY ANOTHER... TASTE CRUDE ALCOHOL ON MY LIPS...
THIS IS WHAT IT IS LIKE.
TINY CREATURES ARE MOVING UNDER MY CLOTHES. I STINK, BUT... HAVE A STRANGE AMBIVALENCE TOWARDS IT ALL. I DON'T CARE ANYMORE.
IN A WINDING, CIRCUITOUS WAY MY MIND TRIES TO FOCUS ON WHAT IT WANTS.
IT WANTS A DRINK. IT WANTS ESCAPE. OBLIVION. IT WANTS TO UNLOAD ITS GARBAGE.
I GO BACK. THE SMELL OF DISINFECTANT. WHITE CEILING, THE DOCTOR IS SAWING MY LEG OFF. IT'S THE DRINK. IT ROTS YOU.
HE'S THROWING IT INTO A PLASTIC BAG, THROWING THE BAG AWAY. MORE TRASH, MORE WASTE...
I DON'T CARE. DON'T GIVE A SHIT WHAT THEY CUT OFF. THEY GAVE ME A JAB, MADE ME FEEL WARM, SLEEPY, SAFE...
I WISH I COULD LIE HERE FOREVER...

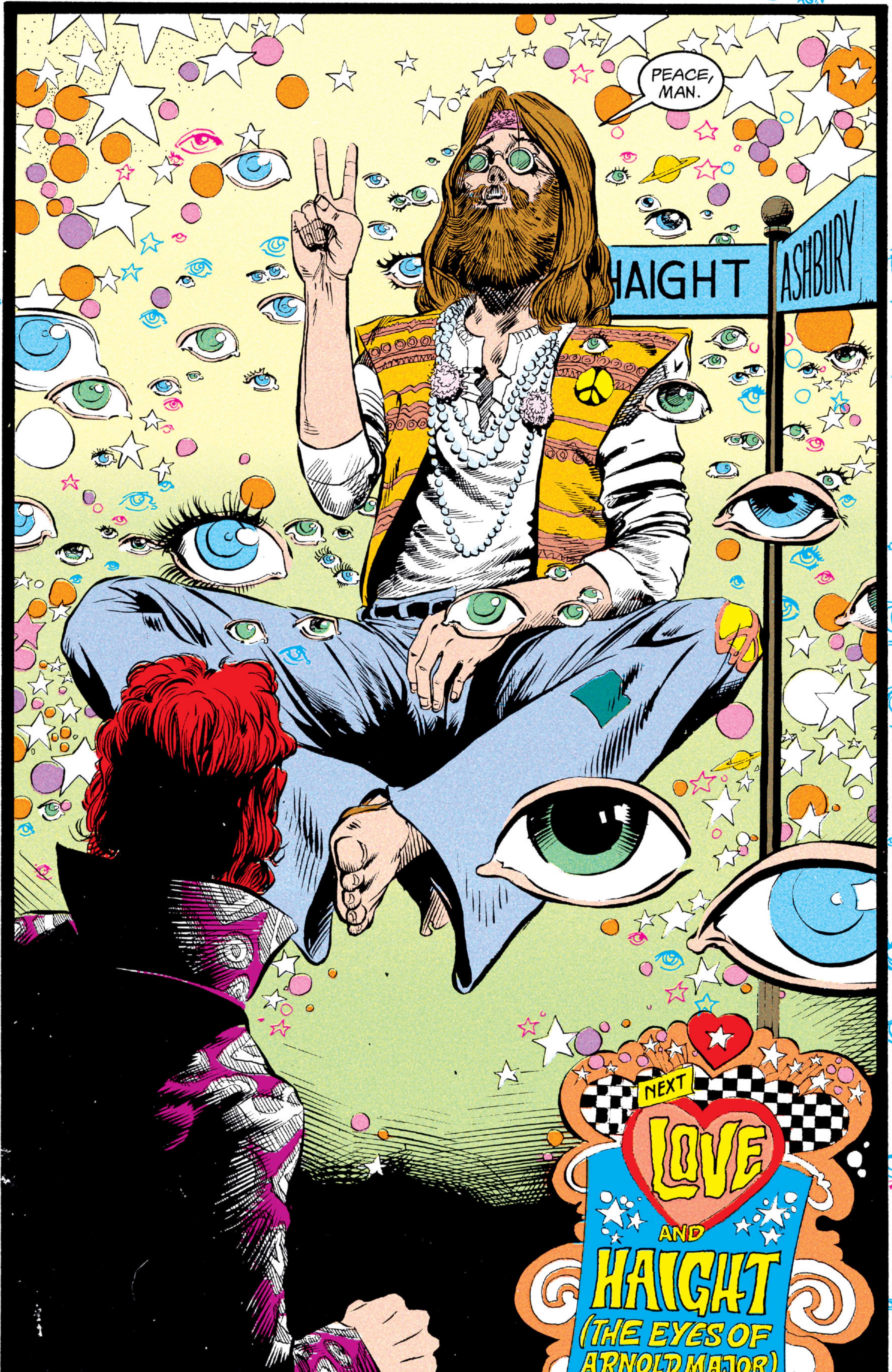
I GO BACK, DEEPER, FEEL SOME ENERGY RETURN. SOME, BUT NOT MUCH...
I'M TIRED, DEPRESSED, DEFEATED, AS I WRITE MORE *LIES* IN A CHILDISH SCRAWL TO BE SENT BACK HOME TO MY MOTHER...
EX
I'VE BEEN IN NEW YORK FIVE YEARS. I'M DOING VERY WELL, GOT A JOB, AN APARTMENT. MUSTN'T WORRY ABOUT ME. THE USUAL BULLSHIT.
THE BOTTLE IS ALREADY BY MY SIDE. THE DRINKING'S STARTED. THE *STRUGGLE* OF THE DROWNING MAN ALREADY GIVEN WAY TO EXHAUSTED SURRENDER...
AND THEN THE BLUE SKY STRETCHES BEFORE ME. THE SMELL OF FIELDS AND FLOWERS. MY MUSCLES ARE STRONG, WITH YOUTH AND HOPE...
I'M CATCHING THE TRAIN. LAUGHING. EXCITED. I'LL BE BACK IN A FEW YEARS, WITH MY FORTUNE...
MA, CRYING, MAYBE KNOWING BETTER, HUGS ME TIGHTLY, AS IF SHE'LL NEVER LET ME GO...
DON'T BE PROUD, GREGORY. IF THINGS DON'T WORK OUT, COME BACK.
YOU HEAR ME, GREGORY STEPHENSON? DON'T BE TOO PROUD TO ADMIT DEFEAT...
GREGORY STEPHENSON. MY NAME IS GREGORY STEPHENSON...
DON'T BE SILLY, MA. OF *COURSE* THINGS WILL WORK OUT.
I'M GOING TO *BE* SOMEBODY, MA...
GREGORY STEPHENSON...

GREGORY STEPHENSON!
GREGORY STEPHENSON!
...GREGORY STEPHENSON...
GREGORY STEPHENSON!
IT'S OVER. JUST GARBAGE. THE SONG HAS STOPPED.
KATHY, IT'S STOPPED. I FOUND HIS NAME...
KATHY?

WHEN I WOKE UP I KEPT STILL FOR THIRTY MINUTES. A TWITCH OF AN EYE SENT THE *DRILL* OFF INSIDE MY HEAD AGAIN.
IT WAS NIGHT. I'D PASSED OUT. A DRUNKEN STUPOR.
I CAN STILL TASTE THE VOMIT. LUCKY I DIDN'T CHOKE TO DEATH.
FIGURED I WAS IN ALPHABET CITY. THE *BAD* PART. NO MONEY, NO CAR, NO SHADE. AND THE VERY NOTION OF A DRINK TURNED MY STOMACH.
WENT LOOKING FOR A CAB. I HAVE FRIENDS IN NEW YORK, THEY WOULD HELP ME OUT WITH THE FARE.
HOTEL
THE ONLY CAB I SAW DIDN'T STOP.
THEN SOME DORKS THOUGHT IT'D BE FUN TO SCARE THE PANTS OFF ME BY CHASING ME AROUND A LITTLE...
IT WAS LIKE A DREAM WHEN I WAS RUNNING, LIKE IT WAS ALL HAPPENING TO SOMEONE ELSE. I WISHED I HAD A GUN, SO I COULD WATCH THEM SWALLOW THEIR LAUGHTER...
GOT BACK IN ONE PIECE. I'LL HAVE TO SPEND THE NIGHT HERE TOO SCARY OUT THERE AT NIGHT.
I'M TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO ME. WHAT'S INSIDE ME. WHAT I SAW AND FELT IN THIS ROOM...
JESUS, SOME PEOPLE LIVE LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME...

GREGORY STEPHENSON. LORD HAVE MERCY ON HIS SOUL. REST IN PEACE, GREGORY.
DO YOU, DO YOU FEEL BETTER NOW? NOW YOU KNOW THE BUM'S NAME?
NOT REALLY. MAYBE I FEEL WORSE. IT'S STOPPED **MEANING** ANYTHING.
WHEN I GET OUT THIS TIME I'M LEAVING TOWN. THIS IS MY LAST CHANCE TO DO SOMETHING WITH MY LIFE.
PRISON'LL KILL ME OTHERWISE.
YEAH. THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY. BUT YOU'RE ONE OF US, BOY.
CAN SMELL IT ON YOU.
DAMN. WHY DON'T YOU STAY IN ONE **PLACE**, SHADE?
WHERE DID ALL THIS GARBAGE COME FROM ANYWAY?
MOST OF IT WAS HERE ALL THE TIME. WE JUST DIDN'T NOTICE IT.
734
THE REST CAME FROM THESE GARBAGE BARGES IN THE EAST RIVER. OWNERS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIND A PLACE TO DUMP THE GARBAGE FOR MONTHS, BUT NOBODY WANTED IT...
WELL, LOOKS LIKE **NEW YORK'S** GOT IT NOW...

FIRST LIGHT. NO SLEEP FOR HOURS BUT I MUST KEEP LOOKING.
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FEEL MY WAY TOWARDS KATHY. THE MADNESS VEST MUST BE GOOD FOR SOMETHING OTHER THAN FIGHTING THE SCREAM.
WAIT. I'M SHIVERING. THIS STREET. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I FEEL BUT I FEEL...
KATHY. SHE'S BEEN HERE, HERE, RIGHT HERE...
SHE RAN DOWN HERE. SCARED. EXHAUSTED. OH GOD...SHE...
NO, SHE'S HERE. STILL HERE. SAFE, AND...
NO. PLEASE. NO...
NO! I CAN'T HAVE THE MADNESS STREAM NOW!
I'VE GOT TO FIND KATHY!
NO!!


PEACE, MAN.
HAIGHT
ASHBURY
NEXT
LOVE
AND
HAIGHT
(THE EYES OF ARNOLD MAJOR)

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
DC
SHADE THE CHANGING MAN
8
FEB 91
SHADE the ChaNgiNG man
TM
by milligan, bachalo & pennington
OUTTA SIGHT!

“DON’T FIGHT LOVE, SHADE.
DON’T BE A LOVE OUTLAW.”

LOVE AND HAIGHT
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TODD KLEIN, Letterer
TOM PEYER, Assist. Editor
KAREN BERGER, Editor
Based on Characters created by STEVE DITKO
SHADE
HAIGHT
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE AND I DON'T CARE. THE MADNESS STREAM SEPARATED ME FROM SOMEONE IN NEW YORK.
I'VE GOT TO FIND HER. I'VE GOT TO GET BACK THERE.
THAT'S JUST A BUM TRIP, MAN.
LIKE, DON'T LOOK BACK.
OH, SHIT... WHAT NOW?...
DON'T FIGHT IT...
...TURN OFF THE MIND, FLOAT DOWNSTREAM. WE'LL HELP YOU. WE ALL HELP EACH OTHER HERE.
THIS IS THE PINK HEAVEN COMMUNE.
PINK'S SO... SO OCEANIC, DON'T YOU FEEL?
I'M FLOWERCHILD. DO YOU LOVE ME?

DO I...? I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU.
YOU HAVE TO KNOW SOMEONE TO LOVE THEM? YOU'RE VERY ILL, MAN.
THAT'S PROBABLY WHY YOU'VE BEEN SENT HERE. IN PINK HEAVEN COMMUNE THE SKY IS ALWAYS PINK.
PINK'S THE COLOR OF LOVE. AT LEAST, HERE IT IS.
PLEASE. SOMEONE I CARE ABOUT MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE. THERE WAS A GUY WITH LOTS OF EYES. WHERE CAN I FIND HIM?
YOU MUST MEAN ARNOLD MAJOR. THE FOREVER CHANGES MAN.
YOU ACTUALLY MET HIM? YOU MUST BE IMPORTANT. NOT THAT ALL OF US AREN'T IMPORTANT.
HE'S BEHIND YOU. KEEPING AN EYE ON US.
HE LOVES US SO.
HIS EYES SEE AND THEREBY CREATE THE COMMUNES FOR US. PINK HEAVEN COMMUNE HAS BEEN AROUND FOR ABOUT TEN YEARS.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. THE MADNESS HAS ONLY JUST ARRIVED HERE. THIS PROBABLY HASN'T BEEN HAPPENING FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR OR SO...
OH, THAT'S AN HOUR OF YOUR TIME. OUR TIME IS DIFFERENT. TIME PASSES SLOWLY HERE, IF AT ALL...
HERE, PLEASE HAVE...
...A CUP OF COCOA. IT'LL MAKE YOU ALL NICE AND WARM AND SNUGGLY.
DON'T LOOK SO FREAKED. YOU'VE JUST SLIPPED INTO A DEEPER LEVEL. THIS IS THE SOPPY SLEEPYHEAD COMMUNE.
WHERE SKIES LIKE FAT DUVETS DRIP LULLABY PILLOWS...
THIS IS A GROOVY COMMUNE IF YOU'RE STRESSED-OUT OR FEEL JUST LIKE A COG IN A WHEEL. ALARM CLOCKS NEVER RING HERE.
EXECUTIVES AND POLITICIANS CURL UP OR HAVE STORIES READ TO THEM AND JUST GET INTO BEING SLEEPY AND WARM AND SOFT AGAIN.
SOME CATS SPEND ALL DAY TOYING WITH THEMSELVES, BUT THAT'S COOL. OTHERS HAVE PILLOW FIGHTS.
OTHERS SPEND ALL THEIR TIME THINKING "I'LL JUST HAVE ANOTHER FIVE MINUTE DOZE BEFORE GETTING UP TO GO TO WORK..."
AND THE FIVE MINUTES NEVER END.
WHERE IS IT? WHERE'S THE EYE?
LISTEN, YOU CAN SEE ME, MAYBE YOU CAN HEAR ME. I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE.
THIS ISN'T GROOVY AND IT ISN'T LOVE. IT'S MADNESS.
HEY, DON'T TOUCH THE EYE, MAN...
ARNOLD MAJOR? IS THAT YOUR NAME? ARNOLD...

ASHBURY
...MAJOR?
YEAH. LIKE, THAT'S THE NAME OF ONE OF THE MASKS I WEAR. I'M THE *FOREVER CHANGES* MAN.
COULD YOU GET INTO SOME COFFEE? *DECAFFEINATED*, OF COURSE.
HAIGHT-ASHBURY. THIS IS WHERE IT ALL HAPPENED IN THE SIXTIES. THE SUMMER OF LOVE. THE HUMAN BE-IN. THE *LOVE EXPLOSION*.
WE HAD CATS LIKE *LEARY* AND *ALAN WATTS* AND *GINSBERG* DROPPING IN.
2775
COOKIES
HAIGHT
NOW THEY'VE ALL SPLIT.
BUT *ARNOLD MAJOR* IS STILL HERE. WITH HIS *EYES*.
EACH OF MY EYES SEES A DIFFERENT ASPECT OF REALITY, AND MAKES AND WATCHES OVER A *COMMUNE*, FULL OF MY CHILDREN.
SAN FRANCISCO HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY *LOVE*.
OPEN
WE'VE TURNED *BROKERS* INTO *BUDDHAS*, *COPS* INTO *CHRISTS*, *HATE* INTO *LOVE*, *LOVE* INTO *HAIGHT*...
DEATH OF THE HIPPIES
MAJOR, THERE'S SOMETHING CALLED *THE AMERICAN SCREAM*. IT'S SPREADING A *MADNESS*. A...
OH, I KNOW ABOUT *THAT*. BUT IT'S A *DIVINE* MADNESS. IT'S LIKE SPLITTING OPEN THE *SKY* AND LETTING *GOD* SPILL IN. THAT'S WHY *YOU'RE* IMPORTANT, SHADE.
SEE, I EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME.
YOU'RE JUST *CONFUSED*, SHADE.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE *FIGHTING* THE AMERICAN SCREAM AND ITS MADNESS.
YOU SHOULD BE *HELPING* IT.
HELPING IT? TO DO *WHAT*, FOR GOD'S SAKE?
TO *KILL AMERICA*. FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING. TO *KILL* THE *AMERICAN EGO*. SO IT CAN BE *SPIRITUALLY REBORN*.
WE TRIED TO DO IT IN THE SIXTIES WITH LSD. NOW, WITH LSD, THE *MADNESS*, AND *ME* AND MY *EYES*, WE'RE GONNA MAKE IT *HAPPEN* THIS TIME.
YOU EVER READ THE *TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD*? THE BARDO THÖDOL? IT'S LIKE A *ROUTE MAP* TO HELP YOU THROUGH THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE EGO TOWARDS THE *WHITE LIGHT* OF *REBIRTH*.
MAYBE IT'S YOUR JOB TO WRITE, OR EVEN *BE*, THE *AMERICAN* BOOK OF THE DEAD...
...GUIDE US THROUGH THE DIVINE *MADNESS* TO SALVATION AND LOVE.
THAT'S NONSENSE. I'VE SEEN WHAT THE MADNESS *DOES* TO PEOPLE. LOOK, HOW DO I GET AWAY FROM HERE? I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO NEW YORK AND FIND KATHY...
DON'T FIGHT LOVE, SHADE. DON'T BE A *LOVE OUTLAW*.
HERE, PLEASE HAVE
...A FLOWER.
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK A LITTLE FAZED.
I WAS SOMEWHERE ELSE. HOW LONG, I MEAN, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN GIVING ME THE FLOWER?
HAH HAH! I JUST SAID, "HERE, PLEASE HAVE A FLOWER," AS QUICK AS THAT, *LESS* THAN A *SECOND* HAS PASSED. HAVE YOU BEEN AWAY? THAT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.
I *TOLD* YOU TIME IS *DIFFERENT* HERE. I HOPE YOU WENT SOMEPLACE *NICE*.
SHALL WE MAKE LOVE NOW? WE'LL ALL FEEL MUCH BETTER THEN.

HUNGOVER IN ALPHABET CITY. THIS IS JUST TOO CLASSY, KATHY.
I'D SAY WE'D HIT ROCK BOTTOM ONLY I DON'T WANT TO TEMPT FATE. KNOW HOW TOUCHY FATE CAN BE.
NAMELESS
I WISH I COULD STOP SHAKING, THOUGH. MAYBE IT'S THE COLD.
I TRY TO FORGET LAST NIGHT BUT IT'S LIKE A TERRIBLE POP SONG I CAN'T STOP HUMMING.
I BECAME AN ALKIE, A REAL JUICEHEAD PLOWED OUT OF MY SKULL.
THE GARBAGE MAN SAW A SEED IN ME, A POTENTIAL, GREW IT, EXAGGERATED IT.
WELL, NOT THE FIRST MAN TO TRY TO GET ME DRUNK. I DRAW ON MY CIGARETTE, FLINCHING AS THE STALE HORROR HITS MY THROAT.
OH GOD, I'VE REALLY GOT TO CLEAN MY LIFE UP.
I WON'T HAVE A DRINK ALL DAY. NOT ONE. I CAN CONTROL IT.
DAMMIT, SHADE. WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?

SORRY, NO ENGLISH...
I'VE LIVED HERE SIX MONTHS AND I DON'T KNOW WHO WAS HERE BEFORE ME. NOW GO AWAY OR I CALL THE POLICE...
SHE DON'T LIVE HERE NO MORE BUT *I* DO, SO WHY DON'T WE JUST *PRETEND* WE'RE OLD FRIENDS?
JERK. WHO *ELSE* DO I KNOW IN TOWN?
SIX HOURS I'VE BEEN WALKING, TRYING TO FIND SOMEONE WHO STILL LIVES WHERE THEY USED TO.
CAN'T SPEND ANOTHER NIGHT LIKE LAST NIGHT. I WANT A BED WITH CLEAN SHEETS. I WANT TO SOAK IN A *BATH* FOR A DAY.
I'M STARTING TO GET *ZITS.*
ZITS. OF COURSE. *RAY STERLING.*
RAY, WHO USED TO HAVE THE *HOTS* FOR ME AT ART SCHOOL BUT WAS TOO *YELLOW* TO EVER *TRY* ANYTHING, THANK GOD.
USED TO HAVE A STUDIO IN THE VILLAGE. *PLEASE* BE THERE, RAY.
I TAKE BACK EVERYTHING I SAID ABOUT YOUR FACE...

RAY STERLING? NO, I'VE TAKEN OVER HIS APARTMENT.
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A MOVIE CALLED *THE TENANT* BY *ROMAN POLANSKI?*
ABOUT THIS GUY WHO TAKES OVER A ROOM WHERE A GIRL, THE PREVIOUS TENANT, COMMITTED *SUICIDE*.
HE BECOMES *OBSESSED* WITH HER, STARTS TO *IDENTIFY* WITH HER...
EVENTUALLY HE *DRESSES UP* LIKE HER AND COMMITS *SUICIDE* IN *EXACTLY* THE SAME WAY AS *SHE* DID.
I REALLY CAN'T RELATE TO YOU LIKE THAT. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
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I THINK I'M HAVING A BREAKDOWN. I'VE BEEN WALKING AROUND ALL DAY, TRYING TO FIND SOMEPLACE I CAN STAY A WHILE.
EVERYONE I USED TO KNOW'S MOVED. I'M DIRTY, HUNGOVER, SICK, HUNGRY, TIRED AND BROKE.
BETTER COME IN THEN. MY NAME'S LENNY.
I ONLY MENTION THE *POLANSKI MOVIE* BECAUSE I WAS CONSIDERING *SUICIDE* WHEN I MOVED IN HERE. BUT IT'S LIKE THE *MOVIE* IN *REVERSE*.
THE *BLANDNESS* OF THE *PREVIOUS TENANT*, YOUR FRIEND RAY, HAD AN *OVERWHELMING* EFFECT ON ME, AND NOW I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO DO IT.
DRINK?
I'D LOVE ONE, YEAH.
I MEAN...
NO. NO THANKS...

OOOPS. ALL GONE.
DON'T YOU THINK DRINKING'S A BIT LIKE SCREWING? OR SHOULD THAT BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND?
LENNY, YOU ARE ONE VERY WEIRD INDIVIDUAL, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING.
I TAKE IT AS A COMPLIMENT. ANYWAY, I'VE STOPPED ALL THAT. SCREWING, THAT IS. NOT DRINKING.
I STARTED QUESTIONING MY **SEXUAL IDENTITY** AND MY SEXUAL IDENTITY DIDN'T HAVE THE **RIGHT ANSWERS...**
COME ON, GIRL. WE NEED MORE **IMBIBATION**.
I'M REALLY NOT UP TO THIS, LENNY. I THOUGHT WE WERE JUST GOING TO A LIQUOR STORE...
THERE'S A FRIEND WHO'LL BE LOOKING FOR ME. **SHADE...**
FRIENDS ARE LIKE THE LEAVES ON A TREE. ONE LITTLE STORM AND THEY'RE OFF.
LOOK'T **THEM**. CALL THEMSELVES THE **PAN-WEIRDNESS CHURCH OF AMERICA**.
COBBLED TOGETHER THESE **INANE RITES** TO WORSHIP ALL THIS **WEIRD** STUFF THAT'S BEEN HAPPENING...

YOU CALL IT *INANE*, BUT HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT *SAN FRANCISCO*? THEY'VE *CORDONED* IT OFF. CAN'T GET IN OR OUT.
WHAT'S THE *GOVERNMENT* SO SCARED OF? HOW COME THEY DON'T TELL US WHAT'S HAPPENING?
WHO'S TALKING TO *YOU*, SHORTY?
OH GOD... IT'S FINALLY HAPPENED. I'M FINALLY HAVING THEM...
HAVING THEM? WHAT ARE YOU HAVING?
THEM. *D.T.S...*
DELIRIUM TREMENS...
OH, THE PINK HAND? I SAW THAT A MOMENT AGO. THOUGHT IT WAS JUST ME.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, SHADE?
I'M TRYING TO GET *BACK* TO HER.
TRYING TO GET BACK ALONG THE *MADNESS STREAM* TO *NEW YORK*...

BUT IT'S HARD, IT'S EXHAUSTING...
SHADE, IT'S IMPORTANT YOU MAKE LOVE WITH ONE OF US SO OUR COMMUNE CAN BE **BONDED**. ARNOLD TELLS US THAT IN THE ISLAMIC PARADISE, **EVERY ORGASM** LASTS **SIX HUNDRED YEARS**.
HERE IT SEEMS TO LAST **EVEN LONGER**. ALL OF US, ALL OF PINK HEAVEN COMMUNE, WILL ENJOY THE ORGASM, AND WE'LL ALL BE CLOSER.
OF COURSE IF YOU'D RATHER GO WITH ONE OF THE **BOYS**, THAT'S COOL. **EVERYTHING'S** COOL IN **PINK HEAVEN COMMUNE**.
NO, LOOK, THANK YOU, IT'S KIND OF YOU TO OFFER, BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED.
I JUST WANT TO GET OUT, UNDERSTAND?
I'M STARTING TO FEEL DIZZY NOW. MAYBE IT'S ALL THIS PINK. MAYBE IT'S SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE OBVIOUS...
MAJOR! I KNOW YOU CAN SEE ME, MAJOR.
YOU AND YOUR **RIDICULOUS EYES**...

I COVER MYSELF IN SOMETHING WET AND COLD AND TRANSLUCENT, BUT THE HEAT STILL GETS THROUGH...
PINK HEAVEN IS BURNING. I HEAR SCREAMING. A FIGURE, UP AHEAD, IN THE FLAMES...
OH GOD. WHAT DO I DO?
MAKE WATER. YES, MAKE WATER...
AIEEEEEE!
WHERE'S FLOWERCHILD? WHERE DID SHE GO?
FLOWERCHILD'S PASSED TO ANOTHER LEVEL. ARNOLD MUST THINK SHE HAS STAYED IN PINK HEAVEN LONG ENOUGH...
TO HELL WITH ARNOLD. I SAW HER BURNING. I SAW HER ROASTING TO DEATH.
NOT IN PINK HEAVEN. NOT IN SAN FRANCISCO. LOVE HAS TAKEN OVER.
MAYBE FLOWERCHILD IS IN THE ORANGE DOLPHIN COMMUNE.
OR EVEN THE DRIPPING FAUVIST COMMUNE...
I CAN'T GET TO GRIPS WITH THE MADNESS STREAM WHILE I'M IN ONE OF MAJOR'S COMMUNES.
I'VE GOT TO GET TO HAIGHT-ASHBURY. THAT'S WHERE HE'S RUNNING IT ALL FROM...
BUT I CAN'T TRUST HIS EYE. HAVE TO MAKE MY OWN.
THIS IS INSANE, BUT I'VE GOT TO BELIEVE IT AND VISUALIZE IT CORRECTLY. IT MIGHT...
WORK...
ASHBURY
HAIGHT
HAIGHT
MAJOR. ARNOLD MAJOR. WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE GIRL, HUH? WITH FLOWERCHILD?
HUH?
DON'T BE A DRAG, SHADE. YOU'RE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE DREAM.
UNTIL YOU FULLY TUNE IN TO THE LOVE EXPLOSION YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO BE OUR AMERICAN BOOK OF THE DEAD.
YOU WON'T BE THE RIGHT BALANCE FOR THE AMERICAN SCREAM, WHICH DOES TEND TO GET A LITTLE HEAVY AT TIMES.

HE KEEPS TALKING BUT I DON'T LISTEN. I IMAGINE KATHY, IMAGINE NEW YORK. THE *MADNESS STREAM*.
FEEL IT CURLING OUT FROM MY STOMACH LIKE SMOKE...
WHAT A BUMMER.
BUT WE'LL TURN YOU ON TO LOVE AND HAIGHT, MAN...
NOW THE MADNESS STREAM ENFOLDS ME LIKE WARM FUDGE RIPPLING WITH ELECTRIC CURRENTS...
I FEEL A RUSH OF WIND ON MY FACE AS I START TO MOVE...
IT'S THE WEIRDNESS! PRAISE THE WEIRDNESS! PRAISE THE WEIRDNESS!
SHADE?
SHADE? YOU MEAN YOU *KNOW* THIS GUY?
SHADE!
KATHY!
YEUKKK.

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN? I HAD TO WALK ALL OVER, I EXPECTED YOU TO FIND ME...
I TRIED. THE MADNESS STREAM TOOK ME AWAY, BUT I'VE MANAGED TO REVERSE IT, KATHY. I'M GETTING MORE IN CONTROL...
SHADE, YOU SEEM KINDA... INSUBSTANTIAL...
I'M NOT ALL HERE YET. THERE'S STILL SOMETHING PULLING ME BACK...
DAMN!
WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
THAT EYE! I'VE GOTTA GET THAT EYE...
AIIIIIII!
SHADE!
HE'S GOING, LENNY! HE'S GOING!
AND AIN'T THAT JUST LIKE A MAN.

I HOLD MY BREATH AND THRASH AND STRUGGLE AND SWIM UP BUT IT'S NO GOOD, THERE'S NO END...
I'M DROWNING IN AN ENDLESS VISCOUS SEA. HEAD AND LUNGS BURSTING, BLOOD LIKE A BASSDRUM INSIDE MY HEAD...
WITH A GROAN MY MOUTH IS TORN OPEN AND THE GELATINOUS FLUID POURS INTO ME LIKE A BARBARIC ARMY...
...CHARGING DOWN MY THROAT, RAMPAGING THROUGH MY LUNGS. ONLY...
...ONLY I *DON'T* DIE, *DON'T* DROWN, FEEL NO PAIN...
TENTATIVELY, VERY TENTATIVELY, I TAKE A *BREATH*...
AND FEEL THE FLUID MOVING SWEETLY UP AND DOWN MY WINDPIPE, SLOSHING AROUND MY LUNGS--
--SOOTHING, HEALING, WARMING, CALMING...
I START TO LAUGH. NO SOUND COMES OUT BUT I KNOW I'M LAUGHING.
AND THEN SOMEONE OR SOMETHING IS APPROACHING, BUT I KNOW THERE IS NO DANGER, NO HARM...
I'M SILENTLY GIGGLING. I MUST CONTROL MYSELF.
MUST REMEMBER THE MADNESS STREAM, KATHY...
IT'S THE GIRL! FLOWERCHILD! I TRY TO SPEAK BUT NO WORDS...
WE DON'T NEED WORDS. I CREATE A MENTAL PICTURE OF HER BURNING, SCREAMING, ME TRYING TO SAVE HER...
SHE SMILES, TAKES MY HAND, AND I FEEL HER SAY,
I DIDN'T BURN. THAT PICTURE WAS MADE BY YOU, BECAUSE YOU'RE FIGHTING THE LOVE.
WE'RE IN ***WARM MAMA MILK COMMUNE.***
DON'T FIGHT THE LOVE ANY LONGER. DON'T FIGHT IT. TURN OFF YOUR MIND...
...FLOAT DOWNSTREAM. FLOAT DOWNSTREAM...
I'M FLOATING. I'M FLOATING...
THE ORGASM LASTS MORE THAN ***SIX HUNDRED YEARS,*** FLOWERCHILD SAID...
I STOP COUNTING AFTER A FEW DAYS...

AND AS I SOFTLY AND ENDLESSLY EXPLODE, MY MIND SOARS LIKE A SPEAR THROUGH THE LABYRINTHINE COMMUNES OF SAN FRANCISCO...
PINK HEAVEN, SOPPY SLEEPYHEAD, DRIPPING FAUVIST, AND MORE, AND MORE...
AND I SEE THE LOVE THAT IS BINDING THEM ALL, I SEE ARNOLD MAJOR'S DREAM WORKING, REALLY WORKING...
COPS INTO CHRISTS, BROKERS INTO BUDDHAS, HATE INTO LOVE, DEPRESSIVES INTO DOLPHINS...
IF AMERICA, IF ALL AMERICA, WERE TO BECOME THIS, TO DIE AND BE REBORN LIKE THIS, COULD IT POSSIBLY BE BAD?
THE MADNESS ONLY FEEDS ON WHAT'S INSIDE PEOPLE.
IF THERE WAS NOTHING BUT LOVE THERE, THE MADNESS WOULD ONLY PROJECT AND ENLARGE AND EXTERNALIZE THAT LOVE.
THE MADNESS WOULD **BE** LOVE.
FLOWERCHILD?
FLOWERCHILD, WHERE ARE YOU? WHERE AM **I**?
HEAD FOR THE WHITE LIGHT.
OH...
THIS IS INCREDIBLE...
HEAD FOR THE WHITE LIGHT...

WHO ARE YOU? YOU GOT SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE WEIRDNESS?
HE CALLED HER KATHY. KATHY WHO? WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SAN FRANCISCO?
I RECKON SHE'S A FED.
TIME WE SPLIT, I THINK.
MAD
WHAT ARE THEY AFTER? WHY ARE THEY ACTING SO *STRANGE?*
EVERYTHING'S GETTING STRANGER. MOST PEOPLE DON'T NOTICE IT, BUT *I DO.*
TAXI!
PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOR IS SUBTLY CHANGING. HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW MANY MORE PEOPLE ARE TWITCHING OR SUDDENLY STARING OFF INTO SPACE?
WELL, I CAN'T REALLY SAY I HAVE...
WHERE TO?
JUST DRIVE. MAYBE IT'S THE *OZONE LAYER,* ALL THOSE EXTRA RAYS BOUNCING OFF OUR SCALPS ALL THE TIME, OR MAYBE *MUTATED ORGONE.* EVER READ *RUDOLPH STEINER?*
HERE, TAKE THIS...
LISTEN, LADY. WHERE D'YA WANNA GO?
JUST HERE WILL DO FINE, YOU SHABBY LITTLE ANAL RETENTIVE.
THAT'LL BE ONE *HUNDRED DOLLARS.* DON'T WORRY ABOUT A TIP.
OH NO...

HEAD FOR
THE LIGHT.

A GREAT CRACKLE AND BOOMING, AS THOUGH I CAN HEAR THE WORKINGS OF THE MINUTEST CELL IN MY BODY, FEEL THE GLUE SHIFTING THAT HOLDS ME TOGETHER...
WHAT ELSE DO I FEEL AS I SPIN TOWARDS THE LIGHT?
MY OWN BIRTH, REMEMBERED. MY OWN PAIN AND DESOLATION.
TORN FROM WHERE I WAS NOT ALONE...
OH GOD THE ALONENESS, OF BEING OUT THERE, IN THE LIGHT...
THE ALONENESS, THAT FIRST SCREAM...
UHHH... OH GOD...
IT'S OVER NOW, SHADE. YOU'VE BEEN REBORN AS A **LOVE CHILD**.
I THINK A LITTLE MORE PINK HEAVEN WILL CALM YOU.
NOW YOU CAN BEGIN TO BE THE AMERICAN BOOK OF THE DEAD.
NOW WE CAN BEGIN TO KILL AMERICA...
I BELIEVE YOU TWO HAVE MET.

THE AMERICAN SCREAM! BUT IT'S INSANE. IT ISN'T A REAL PERSON, IT'S JUST A PERSONIFICATION, A DISEASE...
COOL IT, MAN. DON'T DENY THE TRUTH YOU'VE ALREADY DIGGED.
YOU'RE RIGHT, HE'S A PERSONIFICATION, A KIND OF GESTALT THING OF WHAT WE ARE...
IN STRAIGHT, SCREWED-UP AMERICA THAT MAKES HIM OR IT CRAZY AND DESTRUCTIVE.
BUT AS WE'RE ALL LOVE HERE WE'VE TAKEN HIM OVER. NOW THE AMERICAN SCREAM IS A LOVE CHILD TOO.
THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW AGE.
OH GOD LE--
DON'T SAY MY NAME! JUST GET OUT OF THE CAB.
THANK YOU. HAVE A NICE DAY.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! YOU MUST BE MAD... WHY DID YOU DO THAT?
I ROB PEOPLE, DIDN'T I TELL YOU?
520
WHEN I DECIDED TO GIVE UP THE IDEA OF SUICIDE, I FIGURED I HAD TO REPLACE IT WITH SOMETHING.
HELL, A GIRL'S GOT TO HAVE SOME INTEREST IN LIFE.

JESUS, YOU REALLY ARE A BASKETCASE, AREN'T YOU, I MEAN REALLY.
WELL I DON'T CALL HAVING A FRIEND NAMED SHADE, WHO APPEARS OUT OF NOWHERE AND JUST AS QUICKLY DISAPPEARS, THE ABSOLUTE HEIGHT OF SANITY, DARLING.
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
WHAT NOISE?
A KIND OF GROANING... COMING FROM UPSTAIRS...
DID YOU LEAVE THE RADIO ON?
I DON'T HAVE A RADIO. I HAVE GOLDFISH INSTEAD.
KAAHHH KAAHHH KAAHHHHH
HEAR IT NOW?
YEAH, A KIND OF KAAHHH SOUND. WHAT'LL WE DO NOW?
I SUPPOSE WE'D BETTER TAKE A LOOK.
YEAH. THEN AGAIN WE COULD JUST WALK AWAY AND FIND ANOTHER PARTY.
IT MIGHT BE IMPORTANT. MAYBE IT'S SHADE TRYING TO REMATERIALIZE OR SOMETHING...
REMATERIALIZE? THIS SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING OUTTA STAR TREK...
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KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN, WILL YOU?

KAAHHH
KAAHHH
NEXT:
THE PROPHET MARGIN

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
DC
SHADE THE CHANGING MAN
9
MAR 91
SHADE
the ChaNgiNG man
™
PINK HEAVEN that you PAINTED BLACK
- THAT YOU Pointed fingers at.
McCARTHYISM
by milligan, bachalo & pennington

"NOW LOOK
WHAT YOU'VE DONE
WITH YOUR BAD VIBES."

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO CUT DOWN DRINKING WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY GOOD REASONS FOR HITTING THE BOTTLE?
IT'S TOTALLY REPULSIVE.
WHAT'S IT DOING IN YOUR APARTMENT?
KAAHHH...
KAAHHH...
I THOUGHT LENNY WAS A REAL FIND BUT SHE'S TURNED OUT TO BE A FLAKE, AND THAT'S PROBABLY WHY WE GET ON SO WELL.
DRIBBLING, BY THE LOOK OF IT.
HAVE WE JUST WALKED INTO A FRANCIS BACON PAINTING OR WHAT?
KAAAHH... THEEE...
KAAA... THY...
I THINK IT'S CALLING FOR YOU, DARLING.
WHY DON'T I FIX US ALL A DRINK WHILE YOU TWO GET ACQUAINTED?
YOU... HAVE... TO HELP... ME...
THIS IS... ME...
SHADE...
I... THINK I LOVE YOU...

THE PROPHET MARGIN

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HAIGHT
CLOSED
I CAN SEE HOW WONDERFUL THIS ALL COULD BE, IF THE DREAM COMES TRUE...
IF THE DREAM COMES TRUE? *IF?* LET ME SHOW YOU...
PACE
...SOMETHING. LOOK AROUND. FEEL THE *VIBES.*
THIS IS *ARNOLD MAJOR LOVES US COMMUNE,* PROBABLY THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER, THE MOST *EAGERLY AWAITED* COMMUNE OF ALL...
THE RULES OF *NATURE* HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY THE RULES OF *ARNOLD.* EVERYONE HERE FEELS LIKE *JESUS.*
EVERYONE GOES AROUND *HEALING* EVERYONE ELSE--
--AND SPEAKING IN REALLY FAR OUT *PARABLES* AND THAT...
WE GOT THE POWER TO GIVE *ALL AMERICA* THIS. EVERYONE AS GOOD AS JESUS! BUT FIRST AMERICA MUST *DIE* AND BE *SPIRITUALLY REBORN.*
WITH *YOUR* HELP.
BUT WHAT IF AMERICA JUST *DIES...* AND *ISN'T* REBORN?
WHAT IF IT JUST ENDS UP A *CORPSE?* WHAT IF THE *AMERICAN SCREAM* IS STILL *DESTRUCTIVE* AND *EVIL* AND...
OH, *NOW* YOU'VE UPSET US.
TOO UGLY, THAT'S *YOUR* PROBLEM.
WHY DON'T YOU *LOOK* AT US WHEN WE'RE TALKING TO YOU?
EYE, EYE, MAJOR...
CAN'T EVEN LOOK STRAIGHT.
I BET HE SEES SIX OF US.
NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH YOUR *BAD VIBES.* CALLED UP THE *BOY SCOUT WEREWOLVES.*
YOU GOTTA BE UNITED IN ME, QUICK...
...GLUED TO ME WITH LOVE SO WE CAN GLUE ALL AMERICA TOGETHER AGAIN.
SHADE AND THE AMERICAN SCREAM...
DON'T THINK ABOUT IT TURN OFF THE MIND TRUST ME. FOLLOW ME JOIN ME
BELIEVE IN ME AND MY EYES...
YOU'RE... YOU'RE *SHADE?*
PART OF HIS *SUBCONSCIOUS.* PART THAT GOT BACK TO YOU ALONG THE *MADNESS STREAM,* SPLIT FROM THE REST WHEN I WAS REBORN AS A LOVE CHILD...
SO... WHERE'S THE *REST* OF YOU?
GOOD QUESTION, HONEY.
BEING SUCKED INTO MAJOR'S LOVE EXPLOSION. HE'S ALMOST GOT ME. TRYING TO CONSUME BOTH ME AND THE AMERICAN SCREAM...
AND YOU THINK YOU *LOVE* ME?
AH, THAT SLIPPED OUT. THE REST OF ME HASN'T REALIZED IT YET, BUT IT'S KIND OF TRUE.
THOUGH IT'LL BE ACADEMIC IF I DON'T RESIST ARNOLD MAJOR.

WHO IS ARNOLD MAJOR? SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE YOU GET DIVORCED FROM.
I THINK THE EXPRESSION IS A "BURNT-OUT ACIDHEAD."
HE'S ON A SENTIMENTAL LSD TRIP AND JUST GOT THE MADNESS AT THE SAME TIME...
HE'S FOOLED ME INTO THINKING HE'S GOING TO SPREAD A LOVE REVOLUTION ACROSS THE NATION.
SOUNDS LIKE A SWELL IDEA.
IN THEORY. BUT IT'S FLAWED. MAJOR IS THE FLAW. LOOK, THERE'S NO TIME FOR THIS... I'M SINKING...
KATHY, I NEED YOU... HOLD ME, CALL ME... WE'VE GOT TO GET THE REST OF ME TO PULL AWAY FROM MAJOR...
THAT'S RIGHT. THINK OF ME. I LOVE YOU. THINK OF MY FACE, CALL ME...
CALL YOU? AH... OH GOD. THIS AGAIN...
SHADE...
SHADE, CAN YOU HEAR ME, IT'S KATHY...
KATHY... KATHY...
NO, SHADE. THINK ONLY OF ME. ALL ELSE IS FALSE, THINK ONLY OF ARNOLD MAJOR, HE THAT IS LOVE AND LOVE THAT IS HE...
I WANT THE LOVE; I WANT TO BECOME ONE WITH ARNOLD MAJOR... BUT A VOICE, SAYING NOT YET, PULL AWAY...
...GET AWAY FROM MAJOR. MAJOR IS THE FLAW. MAKE AN EYE, YOUR OWN EYE...
IT'S LIKE LEAPING THROUGH A FIRE...
GOD KNOWS WHERE IT'LL TAKE ME...

THIS IS DEFINITELY THE ONE. THE BROAD CALLED *LENNY* LIVES *HERE*. FRIEND OF MINE SOLD HER SOME COKE A FEW WEEKS BACK.
IT'S THE *OTHER* ONE THAT'S IMPORTANT...
...THE ONE CALLED *KATHY*. SHE KNOWS MORE THAN SHE SAYS. THE PAN-WEIRDNESS CHURCH OF AMERICA WOULD DO WELL TO BE WARY OF HER.
PRAISE THE WEIRDNESS.
KNOCK KNOCK
SHIT.
WHAT'LL WE DO?
RELAX, PROBABLY JUST THE OLD GIRL FROM ACROSS THE LANDING.
SHE THINKS I'M HER LONG-LOST AUNT THAT DIED ON THE LUSITANIA.
TALKS AT ME IN YIDDISH FOR FIVE MINUTES EVERY EVENING, THEN GOES TO BED QUITE HAPPY AND CON--
UHHH...
OH LORD, WHAT IS IT?
WHAT I *THOUGHT* IT WAS, BROTHER MICHAEL.
THE ANTI-WEIRD!

THEN THE PICTURE CHANGES AGAIN. ANOTHER COMMUNE. THE SMELL OF SUGARY PERFUME.
THE SOUND OF WAXY MUSIC AGAINST A BACKDROP OF BREATHLESS, GIRLISH GIGGLING...
SOMETHING'S GONE FUNNY WITH MY EYES, MY VISION...
DON'T WORRY. IT HAPPENS TO ALL OF US HERE. THIS IS SQUINTVILLE.
AND WE'RE ALL SICK OF IT. SICK OF HIS COMMUNES, OF BEING IN HIS DREAM ALL THE TIME, OF BEING CROSS-EYED...
THEIR EYES SEEM RIGHT ENOUGH...
THAT'S BECAUSE THIS IS A COMMUNE FOR THE BOYS.
THIS IS ALL THE GIRLS REALLY LIKE ME COMMUNE. NUTS, HUH?
I MEAN, I'M GAY, BUT I'VE SPENT WHAT SEEMS LIKE YEARS BEING BEDDED BY THESE BRAINLESS LITTLE LOLITAS.
BECAUSE MAJOR'S NOT GAY IT DOESN'T EXIST HERE. THIS IS HIS SHOW, HIS LOVE EXPLOSION. HE'S THE GURU AND WE GOTTA FOLLOW.
MAYBE SOME THINGS NEED REWORKING, BUT THIS IS STILL POTENTIALLY WONDERFUL.
I'VE SEEN THE POWER OF MADNESS. IF IT COULD BE TAPPED FOR LOVE AND GOOD, IT'D BE... LIKE A PARADISE.
BUT NOT MY PARADISE...
WE'VE HAD IT WITH LOVE.
WE DON'T WANT LOVE ANYMORE. WE'RE FAT WITH LOVE FOR CHRISSAKES.
WE WANT HATE! HATE! HATE!
HATE! HATE! HATE!
THERE'S THE EYE! TEAR IT OUT! BLIND IT!
TO HELL WITH MAJOR!
THEN I HEAR A SOUND LIKE EGGS BREAKING ON CONCRETE. AND THEN THEIR SCREAMS...
I FEEL DIZZY AND WANT TO BE SICK...
BUT INSTEAD REMEMBER A PICTURE I SAW IN THE DEEP CULTURE TANK OF OEDIPUS WITH HIS SPIKED, BLIND EYES...
OH GOD... WHAT'S HE DONE?...
OH GOD HELP ME...
HATE TO DO IT BUT IT'S IN THE NAME OF LOVE, SHADE. NOTHING MUST DIVERT US FROM OUR GOAL.
COME BACK TO ME, SHADE. WE NEED YOU AND YOUR POWERS TO SPREAD THE LOVE...
MAJOR... OH GOD, MAJOR, HELP ME... I'M SORRY... I'LL LOVE YOU... GIMME MY EYES BACK...
SORRY, MAN, BUT I AM A JEALOUS GOD. I DON'T DIG CATS SELLING OUT ON ME.
MAJOR, WHAT'VE YOU DONE?
URHMMM
TURNED HIM INSIDE OUT. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TURN AWAY FROM ARNOLD MAJOR...

e of Vis

HAIGHT
WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?
YOUR HANDS. SKELETON HANDS.
THE HANDS OF THE AMERICAN SCREAM...
COOL IT, BABY. THE AMERICAN SCREAM'S PART OF ME. I'M USING IT, TURNING ITS BUMMER VIBES TO BEAUTIFUL LOVE VIBES.
THE SCREAM ONLY DRAWS ON WHAT'S INSIDE PEOPLE, AND ONLY LOVE IS INSIDE US HERE...
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING ANYMORE. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE YOU...
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE. I'M THE CENTER OF THE LOVE WORLD. THIS HUMAN BE-IN IS MY CREATION...
I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM YOU, MAJOR. I'VE GOT TO HAVE TIME TO THINK STRAIGHT...
MAYBE WE SHOULD MAKE LOVE AGAIN, SHADE. YOU SAW HOW SIMPLE EVERYTHING WAS THEN, YOU SAW HOW RIGHT ARNOLD WAS...
FLOWERCHILD, I... I MEAN...
NO. YOU'RE NOT FLOWERCHILD. YOU'VE GOT WORMS COMING OUT OF YOUR MOUTH AND YOUR EYES ARE ALL DISGUSTING AND UGLY AND FUNNY...
DON'T SAY THAT YOU BASTARD ASSWIPE!
HUNGGGG

IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD THINK OF... TO GET AWAY FROM HIM. MAKE HIM ATTACK ME. UPSET HIM. MAKE HIM MAD...
GO FOR HIS SENSITIVE AREA... HIS *EYES*...
HE'S TRYING TO TURN ME INSIDE OUT. I FEEL MY INTESTINES BEGIN TO UNRAVEL LIKE THE PLOT OF A DETECTIVE NOVEL...
FEEL MY SKIN TWITCH, FIBERS AND TENDONS PUSHING OUT, YAWNING TO LIFE. I HAVE TO MOVE. I THINK OF PINK...
VISUALIZE PINK. SURROUND MYSELF IN PINK. FEEL PINK EXPLODING FROM EVERY PORE...
PINK PINK PINK...
...HEAVEN. PINK HEAVEN. *PINK HEAVEN COMMUNE.*
THANK GOD...
BWAHHH WAHHH HUWHAAA
WAHHH... WAHHH...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE GIRL?...
HELL, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE *COMMUNE?*
ALL TURNING BAD. CRAZY INSECTS RUNNING AROUND AND THE PINK'S FALLING APART AND FIRES AND BAD SHIT EVERYWHERE...
AND YOU WERE *RIGHT* ABOUT *FLOWERCHILD*...
SHE DIDN'T GO TO ANOTHER COMMUNE. SHE REALLY *WAS* BURNT TO A CINDER.
WE KEEP *BURYING* HER BUT SHE KEEPS COMING *BACK* AGAIN. WE CAN'T GET *AWAY* FROM HER.
OH NO...
FLOWERCHILD...
DID A VOICE NOT TELL ME THAT THE ANTI-WEIRD SHALL BE AS A BABE, THOUGH ITS HEART BE SURELY UNAMERICAN?
HOW *DARE* YOU COME IN HERE, YOU HEINOUS LITTLE DWARF...
HOLD YOUR TONGUE, WOMAN.
UGNNNN

ision

I WAS MARRIED TO A GUY AT EIGHTEEN WHO USED TO *UNWIND* BY *BREAKING* MY *NOSE*. HIS *KISSES* HURT MORE THAN YOUR LITTLE SLAP...
BROTHERS MICHAEL AND GEORGE,.. TAKE THE WEAPON FROM HER...
DON'T TRY IT... I'M CRAZY ENOUGH TO USE THIS...
WE'RE WILLING TO BE SACRIFICED. YOU CAN'T SHOOT US BOTH AT ONCE...
AHHH, YOU DON'T HAPPEN TO HAVE ANY *BULLETS* ON YOU, DO YOU?
BULLETS? NO, OF COURSE I DON'T...
SHIT. THAT MAKES TWO OF US.
DON'T COME...ANY CLOSER.
I'M CAPABLE OF HURTING YOU VERY BADLY. JUST LEAVE NOW AND WE'LL FORGET ALL ABOUT THIS...
DON'T BELIEVE IT, BROTHERS. IT CAN'T HURT TRUE BELIEVERS.
BROTHER MICHAEL, GET THE *FIRE* GOING...
WE KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH *WEIRDNESS-WITCHES*...
SHADE... START HURTING THEM *NOW*, PLEASE...

I MADE LOVE WITH FLOWERCHILD, BUT SHE WAS ALREADY DEAD, SO WHO DID I MAKE LOVE TO?
FLOWERCHILD...?
...SHADE...
ARNOLD MAJOR? MYSELF? A GHOST?
IT ALL HAPPENS SLOWLY, LIKE YESTERDAY'S PORRIDGE...
KISS ME... LET'S MAKE LOVE... TAKE ME...
NO... OH GOD... NO...
HER BREATH SMELLS OF OLD WARDROBES. THE FLESH HANGS SO DELICATELY, SO SENSUALLY FROM HER CHEEK BONES...
A LITTLE BLACKENED PIECE OF HER EYE COMES AWAY IN MY HAND AND I WORK IT SLOWLY INTO MY LIPS, FEELING MY HOT SPIT MIX WITH IT...
FEELING IT GROWING HOTTER, STRONGER, HARDER...
UHHH... NO, MAJOR. STOP THIS...
YOU BASTARD, MAJOR. YOU SICK BASTARD...
I LET GO OF EVERYTHING NOW LIKE SQUEEZING A BOIL...
...PUSH OUT ALL THE MAD DISGUST AND ANGER AND DESIRE...
...AND THEN WE'RE IN A BUS. THE LITTLE GIRLS AND BOYS LAUGHING AND GAILY SINGING.
LOOK AT THAT MAN'S FUNNY EYES, MAMA! OH LOOK AT HIS FUNNY EYES!
EXIT
MAMA'S SAYING SHHH...
BUT SHE CAN'T RESIST LOOKING, LIKE EVERYONE ELSE...
...AND AS I SIT THERE WANTING TO DIE QUICKLY AND PAINLESSLY, I FEEL MY ARMS CHANGING--
--INTO SKELETON ARMS. SCREAMING ARMS.
MAD SKELETON FINGERS LIFTING TO MY SAD FACE...
SOFT AS YESTERDAY'S PORRIDGE AS THE FINGERS DIG ABOUT FOR WHAT THEY WANT...
I WANT TO END THIS. I WANT TO GO HOME. I HAVE NO HOME. ONLY KATHY... KATHY...
KATHY...
THE FIRE AND THE PAIN BRINGING ME BACK...

MY PAIN. FIERCE HEAT. COLD INSIDE. I'VE LOST ALL TRACK...
...CAN ONLY STAGGER TOWARDS THE LIGHT LIKE A DRUNK OR A MADMAN...
SHADE!
HURT THEM **NOW**! GET THEM TO STOP...
I CAN'T! I WAS **BLUFFING**! I CAN'T DO A THING.
YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN...
THE WITCH AND THE ANTI-WEIRD SHALL BURN TOGETHER!
HOLD IT, HOLD IT...
THEY'RE CRAZY, BUT YOU MIGHT HAVE ONE CHANCE TO SAY THE RIGHT THING AND NOT BURN AND DIE
YOU'RE THE PAN-WEIRDNESS CHURCH, YEAH? SO LOOK AT IT. HOW CAN SOMETHING AS WEIRD AS THIS BE THE ANTI-WEIRD?
YOU SHOULD BE WORSHIPPING IT, NOT **KILLING** IT!
NO!
BAD MOVE. NEVER TELL A ZEALOT HOW TO PRAY...
THE ANTI-WEIRD SHALL WEAR THE CLOAK OF WEIRDNESS, BUT SHALL BE A **FALSE** WEIRDNESS!

KATHY?
OH GOD, SHADE!
GIVE ME YOUR HAND...
I CAN'T! I'M SLIPPING BACK...
WHAT'S **HAPPENING** TO YOU?
SEE HOW THE TRUE FACE OF THE ANTI-WEIRD IS REVEALED!
GET YOUR HANDS **OFF** OF ME!
AND THEN I'M SUCKED AWAY FROM KATHY AND VISION BLURS AGAIN.
I'M IN WATER. NAKED. SKIN LIKE OLD RUBBER. GHOST ECHOES OF MY MOVEMENTS IN THE SWAMPY AIR...
I'M HAVING A BATH, AND THE WALL IS WHISPERING...
YOU'RE IN THE **CRACK IN THE BATHROOM CEILING COMMUNE...**
DON'T FORGET TO WASH BEHIND YOUR EYES...

I LOOK UP AND... OH GOD, THE CRACK IN THE CEILING...
...GOUGING THE WORD TERROR INTO MY EYES. THE MOST GROTESQUE THING I HAVE SEEN IN MY LIVES...
IT SNEAKS SO MALICIOUSLY ACROSS THE PLASTER.
IT STRETCHES SO SHRIEKINGLY ABOVE ME AND MY TEPID SOAPINESS...
I STAY IN THE BATH FOR DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS, NEVER DARING TO TAKE MY EYES FROM THE CRACK, FROM THE SCAR ON THE CEILING...
IT'S BREATHING. WAITING. SALIVATING.
UHHRRR
THE WALLS BREATHING, PULLING FACES, MY BODY DRIFTING LIKE AN ADOLESCENT'S SEMEN IN THE BATHWATER...
THE CEILING DRIBBLING STARDUST AND BLOOD...

LET ME--
--GO!
AIIEIEE!
AIEIEEEEE!
THEY'RE EATING ME! THE *INSECT EYES* ARE *EATING* ME...
OH GOD.
I THINK I'VE TAKEN HIS EYE OUT...

AIEEIEEE!
HUH?...
AS I LOOK, MORE AND MORE APPEAR...
STRETCHING TO THE IMPOSSIBLE HORIZON, THOUSANDS OF THEM.
CRUCIFIED ON BLOODY, WEEPING *EYEBALL-CROSSES*...
...AND THERE'S ARNOLD MAJOR, A THIN CROSS-EYED MAN WITH A NERVOUS FACE.
MAJOR... YOU HAVE TO STOP HURTING ALL THESE PEOPLE. IT'S WICKED. IT'S *OVER*.
NO. THE *MADNESS* AND *LSD* ARE THE *SAME*. WHAT *ACID* DOES TO THE *PRIVATE MIND*, THE *MADNESS* DOES TO THE *PUBLIC MIND*...

A SCAR ON HIS BAD EYE. IT MIGHT BE THE SAME SHAPE AS THE CRACK ON THE BATHROOM CEILING.
ONE TAB OF ACID BURNS AWAY THE **SMUG** REALITY OF OF A PERSON...
...ONE WHIFF OF THE MADNESS BURNS AWAY THE SMUG REALITY OF AMERICA. THEY'RE BOTH THE ***NEXT STEP***...
I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT THE CRACK ON THE BATHROOM CEILING...
BOTH BREAK THE CHAINS THAT KEEP US PUNY. TURNING US INTO GODS AND MAGICIANS...
BUT IT'S ALL GONE BAD, YOU WERE STILL PLAYING ***EGO GAMES***, AS YOU'D CALL THEM...
"EVERYONE LOVES AND ADMIRES ME" GAMES "I'LL GET YOU BACK FOR MAKING MY LIFE HELL" GAMES.
"I GOTTA SCREW AS MANY WOMEN AS POSSIBLE TO PROVE WOMEN WANT TO SCREW ME, EVEN THOUGH I ***AM*** CROSS-EYED" GAMES.
FOR ALL YOUR COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS YOU'RE STILL CROSS-EYED AND SCREWED UP, STILL A KID ON A BUS GETTING RED AND WANTING TO DIE.
YOU'RE STILL PINNED UP ON YOUR CROSS...
NO! IT'S ALL GOING TO PLAN, THIS IS JUST A PERIOD OF EGO-DEATH...
HE CARRIES ON TALKING, BUT I STOP LISTENING.
I'VE SEEN SOMETHING ELSE...

NOTHING MATTERS EXCEPT GETTING BACK THERE.
I HEAR THE SCREAMING AND WAILING FROM THE CRUCIFIED, BUT I HAVE TO DO THIS FIRST...
YOU'VE BLINDED MICHAEL. HE'S ONLY SEVENTEEN.
I'M SORRY. HE SHOULDN'T HAVE GRABBED ME.
PHONE FOR A DOCTOR...
IT'S HIM! THE TRUE FACE OF THE ANTI-WEIRD!
SHADE!
KATHY!
YOU'RE BLEEDING!
STOP IT!
JUST STOP IT, ALL OF YOU.

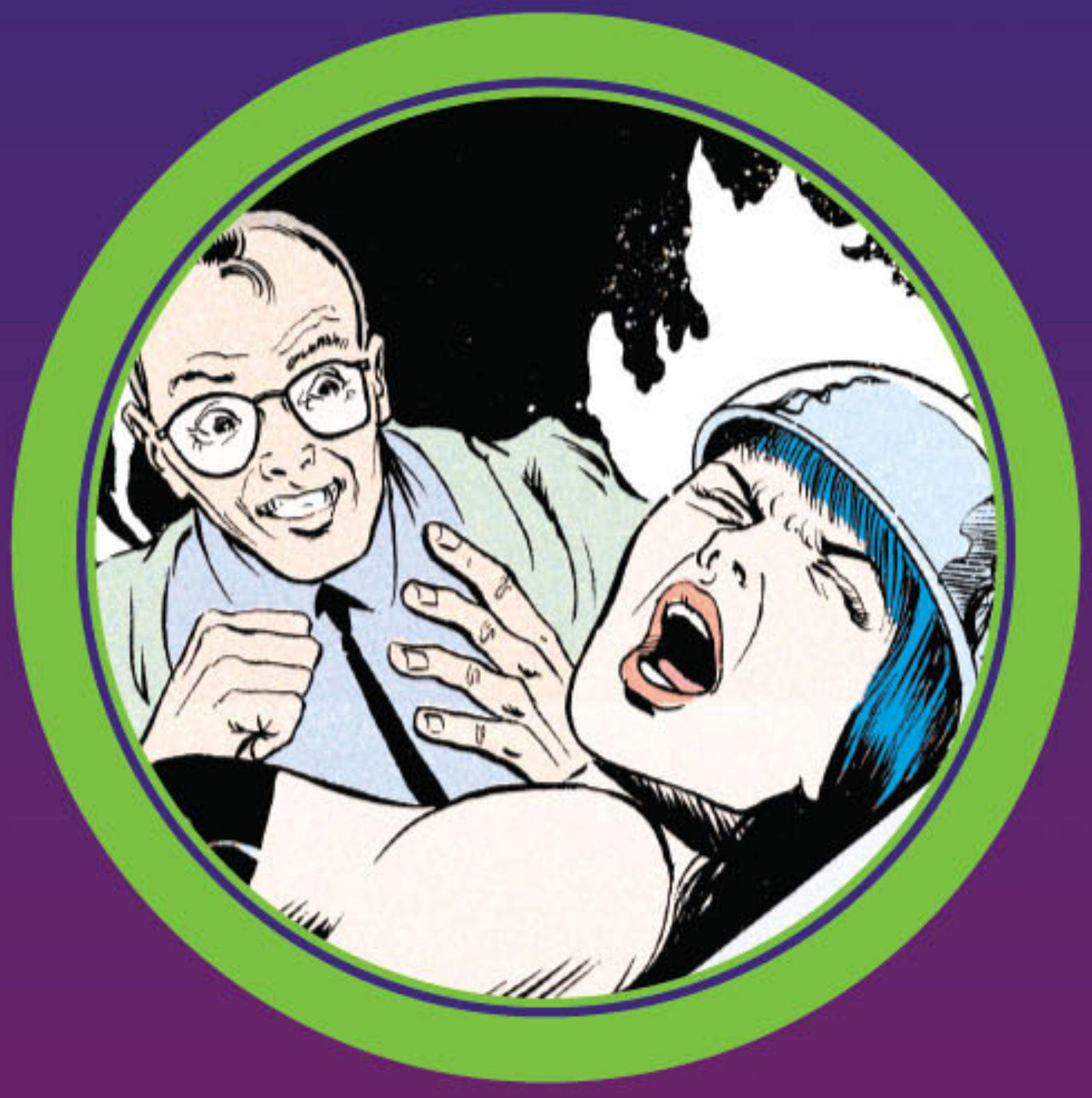
BUT...
SHADE, SIT DOWN AND SHUT IT.
YOU, TAKE YOUR FRIEND TO A HOSPITAL, AND THEN I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO, JUST STAY OUT OF MY SIGHT.
NOW!
YOU OKAY?
I JUST NEED THIS DRINK. I NEED TO LIE DOWN TOO, BUT NOT HERE...
I KNOW A PLACE...
WHAT'S THAT?
IT *WAS* PART OF YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS. LOOKS PRETTY LIFELESS NOW, THOUGH.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT, LENNY?
COVER IT IN RESIN AND CALL IT ART, I GUESS.
D'YOU KNOW GOLDFISH HAVE REALLY SHORT MEMORIES? ONLY ABOUT TEN SECONDS? SAY IT TOOK FISHY *FIFTEEN* SECONDS TO DIE...
FIFTEEN SECONDS GASPING AND KICKING AND DROWNING IN OXYGEN... BY THE TIME HE DIED HE'D HAVE THOUGHT HIS *ENTIRE LIFE* HAD BEEN SPENT LIKE THAT...
MAKES YOU THINK, DOESN'T IT?

LOOK, WE CAN JUST GO TO SLEEP. WE DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING.
I KNOW.
YOU CAN GO TO SLEEP RIGHT NOW IF YOU WANT.
I KNOW. QUIT TELLING ME WHAT I CAN DO.
YOU ASLEEP YET?
THIS IS STUPID. MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST GET IT OUT OF THE WAY, HUH?
GET WHAT OUT OF THE WAY?
CLKK
CLKK
YOU KNOW.
WE CAN'T LET IT SPREAD, MR PRESIDENT.
THINK OF IT AS AMPUTATING A DISEASED LIMB TO SAVE THE REST OF THE BODY.
THAT'S WHAT WE'VE GOT TO DO.
AMPUTATE.

DON'T SAY ANYTHING, SHADE. I DON'T LIKE TALKING WHEN I'M--
HHUH...? WATER?...
OH NO...
CLKK
OH JESUS, SHADE!
AIIEEE!
I'M BURNING UP! I'M IN HELL! I'M IN HELL!

WHERE'D HE GO? SHADE, SHADE, WHAT'S HAPPENING? IS IT SAFE TO MOVE?
YES. IT'S ALL RIGHT, IT'S ALL RIGHT.
IT MUST BE ME. I'M MAKING IT UP. SOME KIND OF FLASHBACK...
IT'S GONE. I'M SORRY. MUST HAVE BEEN ME GETTING SO EXCITED. OR MAYBE I'M STILL LINKED UP WITH SAN FRANCISCO... YOU KNOW...
YEAH YEAH. THE MADNESS STREAM.
JESUS CHRIST, WHAT A TURN-ON.
I DON'T KNOW HOW I MANAGED TO GET BACK ALONG THE STREAM. I THINK IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH *YOU*.
BUT MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE STAYED THERE. MAYBE IT *HAS* TURNED INTO *HELL*...
GO BACK THEN. GO ON. I DON'T CARE. I'M USED TO BEING ALONE.
AW CHRIST, FORGET I SAID THAT. PASS THAT BEER, WILL YOU?
IF YOU HAVE TO GO, I'LL COME TOO. IT'S MY FAVORITE CITY.
KATHY...
SHADE...
...IT'S JUST COME ON THE RADIO. *SAN FRANCISCO'S* A *NO-GO ZONE*.
THEY SAID THE *CENTER OF THE CITY* HAS BEEN *"SURGICALLY REMOVED"*...
88
SURGICALLY REMOVED!
THE BASTARDS HAVE WIPED IT OFF THE MAP!
88
NEXT:
INVASION OF THE NORMALCY SNATCHERS!

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
DC
SHADE THE CHANGING MAN
10
APR 91
SHADE the Changing man
OPEN UP MY FACE... it is A POET's DOOR A MASK DISPLACED
KRAZY
ANGEL told me
WINDOWS OF DEATH
SHADE
by milligan, jaaska & pennington
I HAVE SEEN YOUR FACE CHANGING IN MY MIRROR... WHAT ARE YOU?
I need to KNOW!



"CAN'T YOU FEEL THE DIRT
AND THE WICKEDNESS
BEING DRIVEN OUT OF YOU?
DOESN'T IT FEEL GOOD?"

NOTHING WE CAN DO TONIGHT. THERE'S NO MORE NEWS ON THE RADIO, SO LET'S TRY TO GET SOME SLEEP WHILE WE CAN.
ALL THIS ZIPPING AROUND THE COUNTRY'S GIVING ME JET LAG, OR MAYBE THAT SHOULD BE **MADNESS LAG**...
SORRY. NO TIME TO JOKE. I THINK I'M A LITTLE DRUNK.
IT'S REALLY WEIRD, YOU BEING ABLE TO MOVE BACK ALONG THE **MADNESS STREAM**, ALL THE WAY FROM THE **WEST** TO THE **EAST** COAST, AIN'T IT?
I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT SAN FRANCISCO.
I HEARD THEM MOANING ON THEIR **EYEBALL CROSSES** AND I JUST **LEFT** THEM THERE. NOW THE CENTER OF THE CITY'S BEEN WIPED OUT...
...THE AMERICAN SCREAM HAS **WON**, HASN'T IT?
ONLY IN THE AREA AROUND **HAIGHT ASHBURY**. OKAY, THAT'S TERRIBLE, BUT THIS IS **WAR**, RIGHT? THERE'RE BOUND TO BE CASUALTIES.
YOU DIDN'T START THIS. YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF. YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN...
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

[redacted]

FUNNY. I CAN'T STOP THINKING THAT ARNOLD MAJOR'S DREAM COULD'VE WORKED.
MAYBE HE COULD'VE SPREAD LOVE AND A HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS ACROSS THE COUNTRY...
OM... OM...
SORRY?
NOTHING.
THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE SIXTIES. IF ONLY THE DREAM HAD COME TRUE.
PROBABLY WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT RUSSIA, TOO. AND WHAT THE FOUNDING FATHERS SAID ABOUT AMERICA.
IN FACT, A FEW OLD GERMAN GUYS ARE PROBABLY SAYING THE SAME THING RIGHT NOW ABOUT THE THIRD REICH. I'M SO TIRED...
WHAT ARE THOSE FUNNY LIGHTS? YOU HAVING ANOTHER FLASHBACK, YOU OLD HIPPIE...!
MAYBE... I DON'T KNOW... HOPE IT'S NOT THE STREAM...
THE MADNESS STREAM? NAH... IT'S NOT LIKE THIS ONE BIT...
BANGGG BANGGG BANGGG!
HEY, YOU IN THERE! COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP!
WE KNOW YOU AIN'T MARRIED!

INVASION OF THE NORMALCY SNATCHERS
PETER MILLIGAN, writer
BILL JAASKA, guest penciller
MARK PENNINGTON, inker
DANIEL VOZZO, colorist
TODD KLEIN, letterer
TOM PEYER, assist. editor
KAREN BERGER, editor
based on characters created by STEVE DITKO
IT ALL STARTED LAST MONDAY IN CRYSTAL FALLS, WISCONSIN. I WAS ON MY WAY HOME FROM THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE WHERE I'M A DEPUTY. EVERYTHING LOOKED THE SAME...
...BUT IT WASN'T.
SOMETHING EVIL HAD TAKEN POSSESSION OF THE TOWN...
SKRRRRRRR
HEY! LOOK OUT!
BMMFFF!
IT WAS LITTLE JIMMY DUNPHY. THE BROKEN ARTERY IN HIS NECK TWITCHED A FEW TIMES AND THEN WAS STILL FOREVER.
HE JUST RAN OUT IN FRONT OF ME. NOTHING I COULD DO. AND HE WAS USUALLY SUCH A SENSIBLE BOY.
HE WAS REAL SCARED, CHUCK.
HOW DO YOU MEAN, MILDRED?
HE HAD THE CRAZY NOTION THAT HIS MOTHER... WASN'T HIS MOTHER...
"SHE AIN'T NORMAL," HE SCREAMED. THEN YOU HIT HIM.

MILDRED WRIGHT AND I WENT AND TOLD MRS. DUNPHY THAT I'D RUN HER JIMMY OVER.
AS SHE FELL DOWN CRYING, I SAW HOW SHE WEREN'T WEARING A BRASSIERE.
BEING A CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN, I AVERTED MY EYES.
BUT IT SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME SOMETHING...
THAT NIGHT I WATCHED THE SAME MOVIE I'D WATCHED THE PREVIOUS NIGHT. DAMNED GOOD, TOO. MADE IN THE FIFTIES. NOT LIKE THAT MODERN-DAY PORNO TRASH...
I'M GOING UP TO BED NOW, HONEY. COMING?
BE NICE TO HAVE AN EARLY NIGHT, HUH? JUST LIKE WE USED TO?
COMING, GRIZZLY BEARIKINS?
LITTLE BABY BEARIKINS FEELS LIKE A CUDDLY WUDDLY...
THE MOVIE WAS ABOUT NORMAL FOLK BEING TAKEN OVER BY ALIENS...
I'M WATCHING THIS, WILMA. YOU GO UP.
INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCH
I'M OUT EARLY TOMORROW, SO I'LL USE THE SPARE BEDROOM.
DING DONG DING DONG
I'LL GET IT.

IT WAS JOE AND MILDRED WRIGHT...
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, CHUCK. IT'S THE KIDS. SKIP AND SUE-ELLEN...
THEY IN SOME KINDA TROUBLE?
THE WRIGHTS AND US WERE MEMBERS OF THE DECENCY LEAGUE, DEDICATED TO AN AMERICAN SOCIETY BASED ON NORMAL BEHAVIOR AND STANDARDS.
WE CAN'T RIGHTLY SAY. THEY'RE JUST... DIFFERENT...
THEY DON'T SEEM QUITE... RIGHT, CHUCK. IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW BAD AND DIRTY THINGS ARE IN THIS COUNTRY NOWADAYS. THIS AFFECTS PEOPLE, 'SPECIALLY KIDS...
WHEN DECENT FOLK GET TOO CASUAL, UNNORMAL HABITS SET IN, POLLUTING US ALL. JUST LIKE WHEN YOUR BOWELS BECOME IRREGULAR.
I'LL HAVE A WORD WITH YOUR KIDS IF YOU LIKE.
'PRECIATE IT, CHUCK.
ON THE WAY TO THEIR HOUSE I SAW TAD OPPENHEIMER LOADING TEE VEE SETS ONTO HIS TRAILER.
I'D KNOWN TAD MOST OF MY LIFE, BUT I'D NEVER KNOWN HIM TO DEAL IN TEE VEES, NOR TO WEAR A SHIRT WITH FLOWERS ON IT.
BUT STILL THE WARNING BELLS DIDN'T SOUND...

I THOUGHT IT BEST TO GO IN ALONE. THE WRIGHT KIDS WERE IN THE FRONT ROOM.
I LOOKED AT THEM THROUGH THE CRACK IN THE DOOR AND MY SPINE FROZE LIKE ALASKA.
THEY'D BEEN SUCH NICE, NORMAL KIDS. NOW I KNEW. THEY **WERE** DIFFERENT, BUT HOW? WHY? I DIDN'T KNOW. I JUST **KNEW**...
...AND I IMAGINED THEM DOING ALL THOSE FILTHY THINGS TOGETHER, THEIR HARD YOUNG BODIES, THEIR GODLESS PERVERSIONS...
AS SKIP CAME OUT I HID IN THE DOOR LEADING DOWN TO THE BASEMENT. YES, HIS HAIR WAS ALL **WRONG** AND HE WAS CARRYING A BOOK IN **FRENCH**.
THEN I HEARD A **NOISE**... FROM THE **BASEMENT**...
Du Cot De Chez Swa...
MARCEL PROUST
BEING A COP I WENT TO INVESTIGATE.
HOW I WISH I HADN'T!
IT WAS **HORRIBLE!** ROWS OF TEE VEES PLAYING FILTHY PORN MOVIES, SMUTTY SOAPS LIKE **THIRTYSOMETHING**, LIBERAL DOCUMENTARIES...
AS I WATCHED, THE SCREENS BEGAN TO **SWELL** AND **CRACK** AND...
DOPE
MTV
...IT WAS ME! A SEMI-FORMED, FILTHY, DIRTY VERSION OF DEPUTY CHUCK KLEIN GROWING OUT OF THE SCREEN...
ONLY YEARS OF TRAINING KEPT ME FROM LOSING MY SUPPER.

IT BECAME CLEAR: THE TEE VEES HAD LANDED IN CRYSTAL FALLS FROM OUTER SPACE, OR AT LEAST FROM OUT OF AMERICA.
THEY WERE PUMPING OUT FILTH AND TAKING OVER NORMAL FOLK, SUCKING THE NATURAL AMERICAN FLUIDS FROM OUR BODIES...
I SAW IT ALL! MRS. DUNPHY'S BRA-LESS BOSOM! TAD'S SHIRT AND TEE VEE SETS! THE WRIGHT KIDS! FLASHY BLACKS DRIVING THEIR CARS!
A HUNDRED OTHER LITTLE THINGS I'D SEEN BUT OVERLOOKED! THE **NORMALCY SNATCHERS** HAD BEEN QUIETLY TAKING OVER THE **ENTIRE TOWN!**
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN HERE? WHO'S...? OH... DEPUTY KLEIN...
WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'RE ALL THESE TEE VEES DOING HERE?
YOU DON'T FOOL ME. I KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. YOU'RE UNNORMAL FILTH TRYING TO TAKE OVER...
WELL, THE NORMAL PEOPLE OF CRYSTAL FALLS ARE GOING TO FIGHT BACK!
STARTING **NOW!**
BMM BMM
BMM BMM

CHUCK? YOU'VE BURNT OUR HOUSE DOWN!
AND I'VE SHOT YOUR KIDS. SORRY. NO OPTION.
I EXPLAINED IT ALL TO JOE AND MILDRED. THEIR KIDS, THE TEE VEES, THE NORMALCY SNATCHERS...
WHO KNOWS HOW MANY OF OUR NEIGHBORS HAVE BEEN TAKEN OVER! WE GOT TO GO THROUGH THEM, ONE BY ONE.
IT'S OUR DUTY TO *STOP* THIS EVIL SPREADING.
JUST LOOK AT A TEE VEE OR PICK UP A PAPER AND YOU CAN SEE IT! US NORMAL FOLK ARE BECOMING THE **MINORITY**. BUT WHERE ARE **OUR** RIGHTS?
DON'T BE ASHAMED TO CRY, MILDRED. IT'S ONLY NORMAL...
WHAT ABOUT ***WILMA***, CHUCK? SHE OKAY?
WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO RIGHT AND WRONG?
WILMA! OH MY GOD, I'D FORGOTTEN...
COME TO THINK OF IT... SHE ***HAS*** BEEN BEHAVING ***ODDLY*** RECENTLY.
ON THE WAY HOME I SHOT TAD OPPENHEIMER AND HIS FAMILY. AT LEAST, I SHOT THE INHUMAN PERVERTS WHO HAD TAKEN THEM OVER.
WE DAREN'T ASK FOR ANY HELP. AS FAR AS WE KNEW NO ONE ELSE IN CRYSTAL FALLS WAS NORMAL...
YOU FOLKS'LL WAIT DOWNSTAIRS, WHILE I CHECK ON WILMA.

WILMA...WILMA, IT'S ME. CHUCK. I GOTTA ASK YOU A QUESTION.
D'YOU HAVE ANY DIRTY... ANY DIRTY OR UNNATURAL THOUGHTS?
UHNNN WHA...?
CHUCK? CHUCK, YOU OLD DEVIL, CHANGED YOUR MIND AND COMING TO BED, HUH?
JUST ANSWER THE QUESTION, WILMA. YOU GOT ANY STRANGE OR FILTHY DESIRES...?
HMMM, CHUCK...
WHY DON'T YOU SLIDE INTO BED AND FIND OUT, GRIZZLY MISTER BEARIK...
BMM BMM
DON'T THINK OF IT AS WILMA, MILDRED. WILMA WENT A LONG TIME AGO. RECKON THE NORMALCY SNATCHERS HAVE BEEN AT WORK FOR **YEARS**.
BUT IS **KILLING** THEM ALL THE ONLY WAY, CHUCK?
'LESS WE HAD SOME WAY TO REVERSE THE PROCESS AND MAKE FOLK NORMAL AGAIN AND DRIVE THE FILTH OUT AND...
WAIT! OF COURSE! THE ***CORRECTION MACHINE!***

I TOOK OVER THE HOUSE WHEN MA AND PA PASSED ON. THE BASEMENT'S JUST HOW IT WAS THE DAY PA DIED.
HE'D SPEND HOURS DOWN HERE WORKING ON HIS MACHINE. PA WAS A COP, TOO. I GUESS HE COULD ALSO SEE INTO THE FUTURE SOME...
ME AND MA WEREN'T ALLOWED DOWN HERE...
HOW COULD WE HAVE KNOWN PA WAS BUILDING A MACHINE THAT COULD MAKE PEOPLE NORMAL AGAIN WHO'D BEEN TAKEN OVER BY NORMALCY SNATCHERS!
LOOKING BACK, MAYBE THE SNATCHERS WERE ALREADY AT WORK AND PA THOUGHT I WAS BEING TAKEN OVER...
ONE TIME HE SAID I WAS DIRTY AND UNNORMAL...
STRAPPED ME INTO HIS MACHINE AND HE DROVE THE DIRTINESS AND UNNORMALCY OUT OF ME...
...AND THEN HE SAID THE STRANGEST THING:
MAYBE ONE DAY IN THE FUTURE YOU'LL NEED THIS, CHUCK...
...USE IT WISELY. BUT USE IT IF YOU HAVE TO...
HE SAW THAT THIS DAY WOULD COME. THE DAY THE UNNORMALS THREATENED TO TAKE OVER CRYSTAL FALLS...
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR PA, CHUCK?
GOT KILLED BY SOME GUNMEN, JOE. DIED A HERO.
NOW I THINK ABOUT IT, MAYBE THOSE GUNMEN WERE UNNORMALS. A SCOUTING PARTY, PERHAPS...

WE STARTED WITH THOSE WE KNEW WERE UNNORMAL, STRAPPING THEM TO THE CORRECTION MACHINE.
DAMNED SHAME I SHOT WILMA BEFORE I FIGURED OUT HOW TO REVERSE THE UNNORMALCY...
EVERYONE WHO WENT THROUGH THE MACHINE CAME OUT NORMAL. IT WAS BEAUTIFUL. PA WOULD HAVE LOVED IT!
EVEN THE CHANGS FROM NEXT DOOR STOPPED BEING SO YELLOW AND UNNORMAL.
BUT THEN CAME THE HARD PART, TRACKING DOWN THE REST...
DON'T MOVE! WHATCHA WATCHING?
WHAT? WHU... HU... A MOVIE... CALLED TRACK 29...
OH YEAH? ABOUT WHAT?
UHH... A GUY INTO MODEL RAILWAYS AND... HIS WIFE WHO WANTS KIDS AND MEETS A GUY SHE THINKS IS HER KID AND THEY FOOL AROUND AND HE PUTS SHAVING CREAM ON HER DIAPHRAGM AND...
BASTARD!
LOOKS LIKE A YOUNG COUPLE JUST MOVED INTO THE OLD JACKSON PLACE.
NO CAR OUTSIDE. NO "JUST MARRIED" STICKERS OR NOTHING...
NO CAR? SOUNDS SUSPICIOUS.
BETTER INVESTIGATE...

WAS A TIME WHEN PEOPLE WERE PROUD TO BE NORMAL.
KNKK KNKK
YOU IN THERE! COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP.
WE KNOW YOU AIN'T MARRIED!
DON'T LOOK, MILDRED. THEY'RE DOING SOMETHING DIRTY!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
NOW IF YOU'RE MARRIED OR GOT A STEADY JOB OR YOU'RE CLEAN OR JUST PLAIN STRAIGHT AND NORMAL, YOU'RE SOME KIND OF LAUGHING STOCK!
UNNNGGG
YOU'RE HEADED FOR THE CORRECTION MACHINE, BOY...
GONNA MAKE YOU NORMAL AGAIN.
UNNN...
OH MY.

GIVE YOURSELF UP... OR THE FEMALE GETS IT.
DON'T LISTEN TO THE BASTARD, SHADE. HIT HIM...
YEP. THIS REALLY WAS A BAD ONE...
GOOD GOD!
RUN, KATHY! I'M BEHIND YOU...
OLD JOE WRIGHT WAS PROVING TO BE A REAL BRICK, THOUGH...
WHUMMPH!
UGNNNRRR
THE NEWCOMERS WERE SOON STRAPPED TO THE CORRECTION MACHINE. THEY WERE BAD ONES. SEEMED THE NORMALCY SNATCHERS WERE STEPPING UP A GEAR...
OKAY, JOE, THROW IT...
AS DEAR PA'S MACHINE BEGAN DRIVING THE UNNORMALCY OUT OF THEM I REALIZED WE'D HAVE TO STEP UP A GEAR, TOO...
NOT A SINGLE TRACE OF UNNORMAL BEHAVIOR MUST BE ALLOWED TO STAY IN CRYSTAL FALLS.

NO... NO... NO...
CHUCK! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO HIM...
NO!
C'MON, KATHY, WE GOT TO GET OUT...
UHHH? SHADE? WHAT THE HECK'S...
UNNORMAL TRASH!
SHIT. JUST HOLD ON...
DEAR LORD, THEY WERE A LIVING NIGHTMARE!
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE UNNORMALCY GOES UNCHECKED...
BUT DON'T WORRY.

"THEY WON'T GET FAR."
I THINK THOSE BASTARDS BROKE A TOOTH. AND MY HEAD'S **KILLING** ME.
HOW DO **YOU** FEEL?
FUNNY. I HAVE AN ALMOST **IRRESISTIBLE** URGE TO RAISE CHILDREN AND BUY COOKBOOKS.
IT'LL PASS. WE WEREN'T ON THE MACHINE LONG.
I TOOK A LOOK AT DEPUTY CHUCK KLEIN'S MIND. BOY, WHAT A MESS. WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE SO WE CAN WORK OUT HOW TO FIGHT HIM...
NICE IDEA. HOW?
I'LL HAVE TO DRESS US BOTH UP A BIT. HOLD MY ARM.
TRY TO ACT NORMAL. LIKE WE WERE MARRIED OR SOMETHING.
HOW DID WE GET HERE? IT WAS THE MADNESS STREAM, WASN'T IT?
MUST HAVE BEEN. BUT WE HAVEN'T TIME TO PLAY AROUND WITH IT.
REMEMBER, JUST KEEP WALKING. IF ANYONE SAYS ANYTHING, JUST ANSWER THEM POLITELY AND NORMALLY.
JEEZ! WHAT AM I, **ELEPHANT GIRL**? I **KNOW** HOW TO ACT NORMAL. I **AM**, FOR GOD'S SAKE...
MAYBE, BUT NOT **DEPUTY KLEIN'S** IDEA OF NORMAL.
HEY! HEY, DID YOU **SEE** THAT, EVERYBODY?
THAT YOUNG LADY JUST PASSED MY BABY WITHOUT LEANING OVER AND MAKING A SILLY FACE AND **GOING** "GAA GAA GOO GOO GAA!"
SHE'S NOT NORMAL!

DAMMIT, HOW WAS *I* SUPPOSED TO KNOW?
DOWN HERE, WE CAN STILL LOSE 'EM...
SHADE!
WHERE DID THE GUY GO?
DUNNO, WE'LL GET HIM SOONER OR LATER.
TAKE THE LITTLE LADY TO THE MACHINE...
PRETTY LITTLE THING, AREN'T YOU? IF YOU'RE LUCKY I'LL LET YOU DO MY ***IRONING*** SOMETIME.
WHEN YOU'RE ***NICE*** AND ***NORMAL***, THAT IS...
GOD, CAN'T YOU FEEL THE DIRT AND THE WICKEDNESS BEING DRIVEN OUT OF YOU?
DOESN'T IT FEEL ***GOOD***?

HOPE NO ONE NOTICES ME LIMPING. PROBABLY NOT NORMAL TO LIMP. THE CAR NEARLY TORE MY LEG OFF.
I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT HOW KATHY IS, JUST HOW I CAN DEAL WITH THIS...
I PIECED TOGETHER WHAT I CAUGHT FROM KLEIN'S MIND. IT'S FUNNY, I'VE TRIED READING KATHY'S MIND BUT GET NOTHING.
SEEMS THEY HAVE TO HAVE THE MADNESS BEFORE I CAN LOOK INSIDE THEM...
I WAS ABLE TO DO THAT WITH KLEIN. FOUND OUT SOMETHING ABOUT HIM, AND HIS PA, AND HIS MACHINE. I HOPE IT'S ENOUGH.
HEY! HEY, YOU'RE NOT SMOKING A *PIPE*!
LOOK, EVERYBODY, THIS FREAK ISN'T SMOKING A --
WHUMPH!
MUCH OBLIGED.

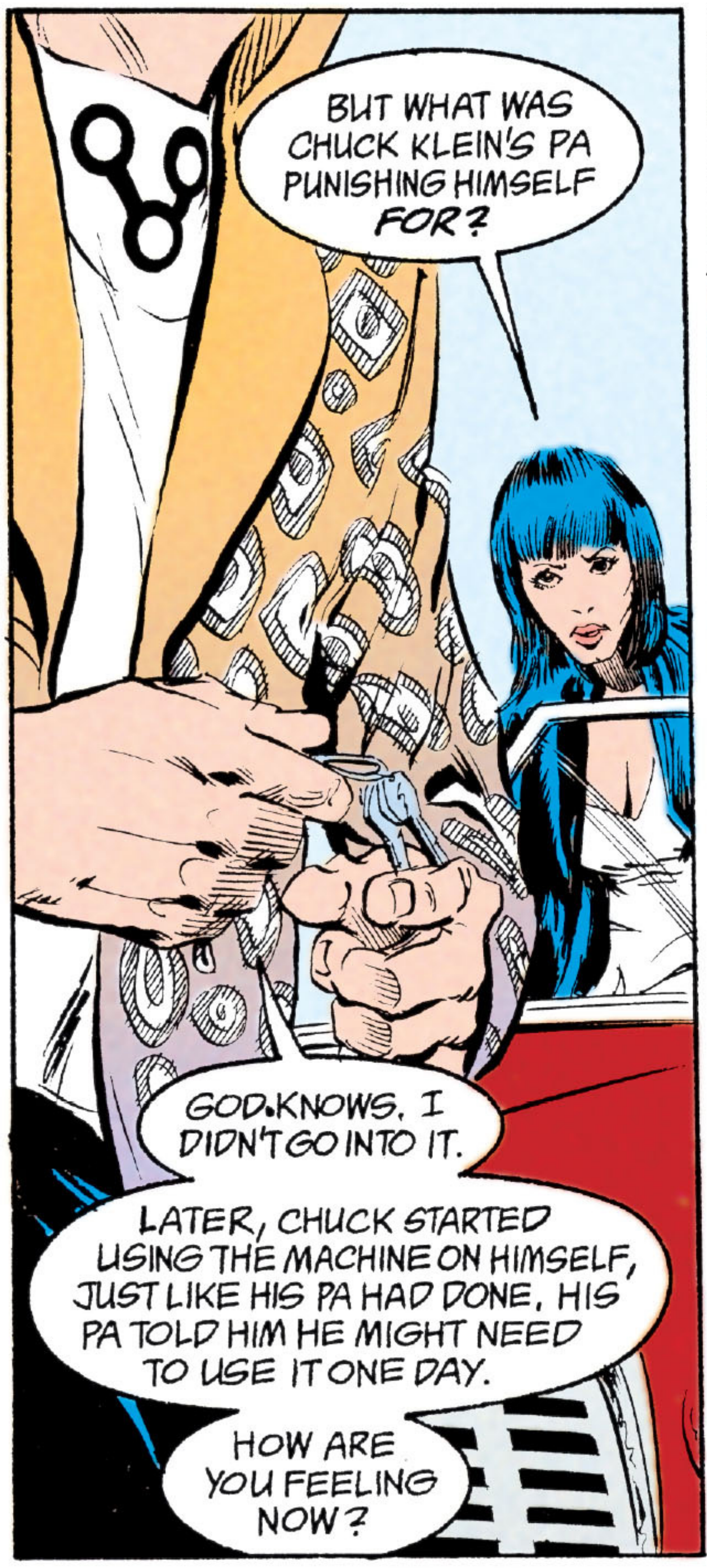
NO SIGN OF THE PERVERT BUT WE KEPT UP THE GOOD WORK, THOUGH THINGS STILL WEREN'T NORMAL ENOUGH.
I WANT STRICT AND REGULAR BATHROOM TIMES INSTITUTED. THERE'LL BE NO MORE PROMISCUOUS DEFECATION IN CRYSTAL FALLS...
WHAT ABOUT THOSE OLD PEOPLE WE ROUNDED UP. SEEMED NORMAL ENOUGH.
ASK THEM WHAT SIDE OF THE BED THEY SLEEP ON AND WHETHER THEY BRUSH THEIR TEETH UP AND DOWN OR SIDE TO SIDE...
HUH?
LISTEN, I'M NORMAL, AIN'T I? I AM ONE HUNDRED PERCENT NORMAL, AND I SLEEP ON THE RIGHT AND BRUSH SIDE TO SIDE. THAT'S NORMAL, HEAR ME?
SO I WANT ALL LEFT-SIDERS AND UP-AND-DOWNERS STRAPPED TO THE CORRECTION MACHINE.
WHUPP!
LOOK'T THAT CREASE! CALL THAT IRONED?
DO IT AGAIN, YOU IMBECILE!
I BEEN THINKING, JOE. WOMEN AIN'T NORMAL. I MEAN, THEY'RE NOT LIKE US. IT'S ALL A BIG PLOT, MAKING US THINK THEY'RE NORMAL.
I'M UPPING THE POWER OF THE MACHINE. SEE IF WE CAN GET WOMEN TO BE LIKE US...
IF NOT, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO SHOOT 'EM ALL. BY THE WAY, JOE...
...DO YOU TAKE MILK WITH YOUR COFFEE?
MILK? AH, SURE, SURE I TAKE MILK...
GLAD TO HEAR IT. JUST CHECKING, JOE. JUST CHECKING.

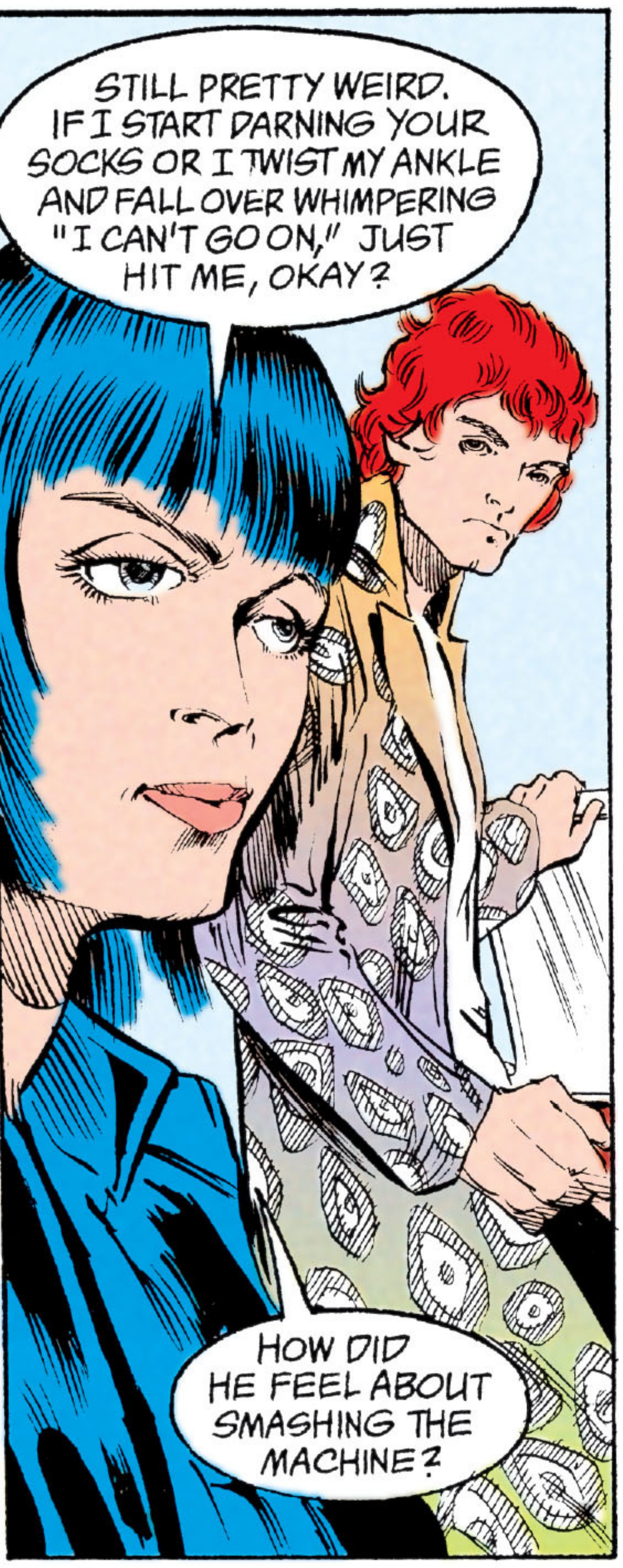
I'M GETTING GOOD AT THIS **ARM TRICK**, BUT I MUSTN'T LOSE MY TEMPER. I HARDLY EVER LOSE MY TEMPER AND WHEN I DO IT'S BAD. I'M JUST SICK OF BEING PUSHED AROUND ALL MY LIFE.
I WANT HIM IN THE BASEMENT. I SQUEEZE HIS THROAT JUST HARD ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM PASS OUT.
NOT TOO HARD. DON'T WANT TO KILL HIM. WHY DIDN'T THEY SHOW ME HOW TO DO THIS KIND OF THING ON META?
WHY DO I HAVE TO LEARN EVERYTHING AS I GO ALONG?
BMM BMM BMM!
ONE BULLET THROUGH MY HEAD NOW AND IT'S ALL OVER. THE MADNESS TAKES AMERICA.
BMM BMM BMM!
I'D BETTER DO THIS RIGHT...

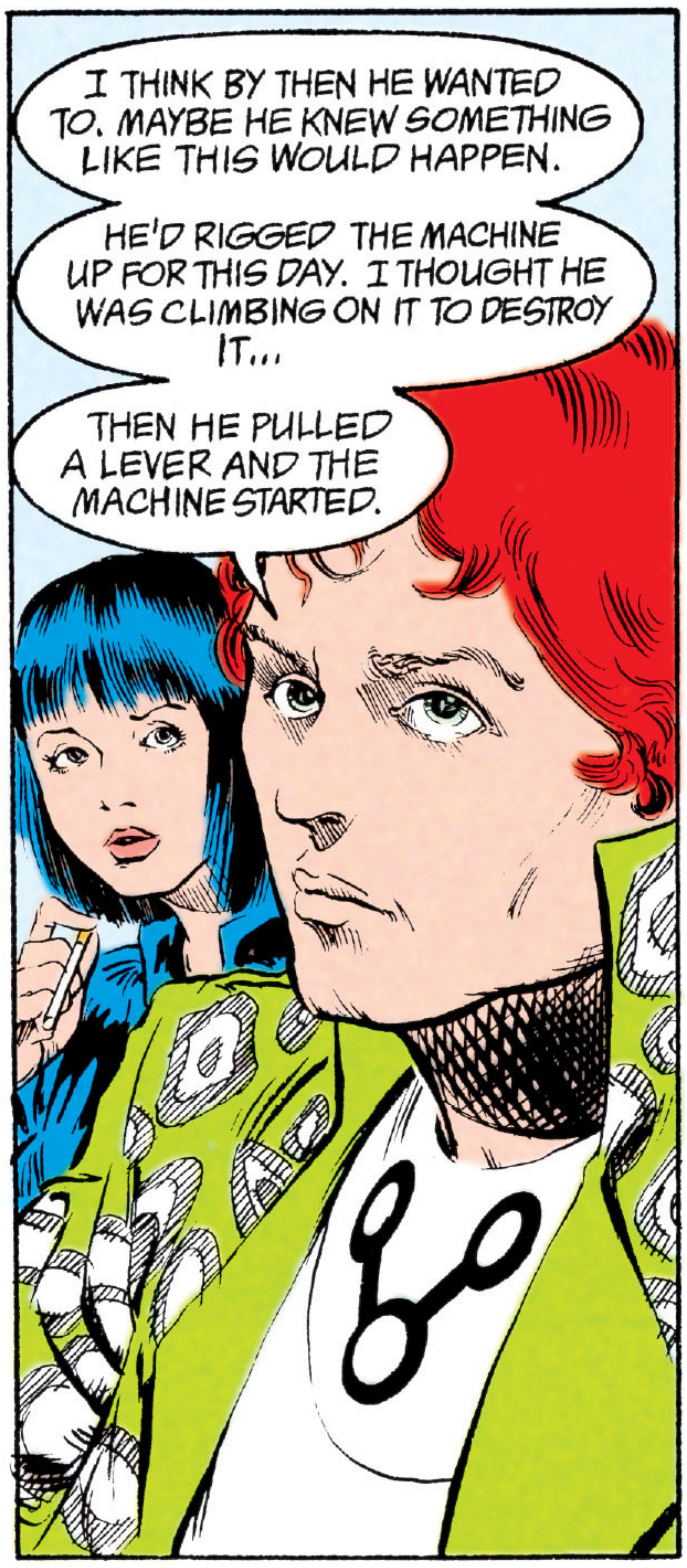
WAKE UP, KLEIN. WE'RE IN YOUR PA'S BASEMENT. YOUR... **FRIENDS** ARE TRYING TO BUST IN, BUT I'VE SET UP A BARRICADE...
YOU'RE GOING TO DO WHAT I WANT. OR I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU.
NO! YOU'RE ONE OF THE NORMALCY SNATCHERS! YOU'RE TAKING OVER!
SHUT UP!
YOU'VE BROKEN MY TOOTH, MY LEG'S HURTING, MY HEAD'S HURTING. I'M VERY TIRED AND I'VE A LOT ON MY MIND. I WANT TO CLEAR THIS UP AND LEAVE, UNDERSTAND?
THERE. ARE. NO. NORMALCY. SNATCHERS. JUST YOU. AND YOUR MADNESS. AND THE AMERICAN SCREAM.
I THINK IF YOU SMASH YOUR PA'S MACHINE, ALL THE PEOPLE YOU'VE "CORRECTED" WILL BE NOR... WILL GO BACK TO BEING HOW THEY WERE.
YOU MADE THIS MACHINE. ONLY YOU CAN DESTROY IT.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? **I** DIDN'T MAKE IT, IT WAS MY **PA**!
YOUR PA? **YOU** KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR PA, DON'T YOU? YOU SAW IT. IT WAS YOUR FAULT. THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD YOU, WASN'T IT?
NO! HE WAS A HERO! SHOT BY GUNMEN, HE...
OKAY, KLEIN. IF THIS IS HOW YOU WANT IT...
LET'S GET TO THE **TRUTH**, SHALL WE?

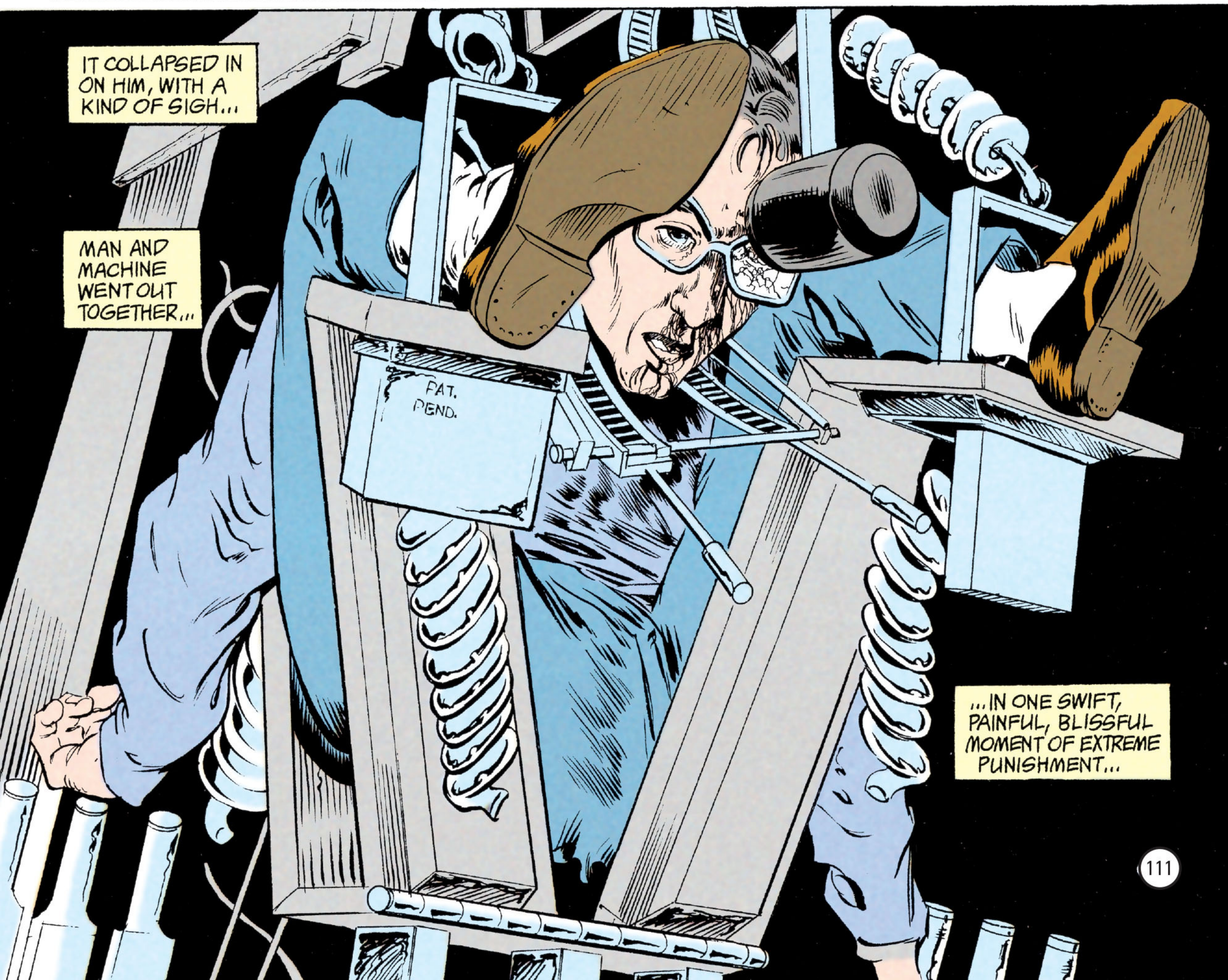
WHAT... IN THE NAME OF GOD?
IT'S YEARS AGO. HOW OLD ARE YOU, CHUCK? EIGHT? NINE? YOU SHOULDN'T BE DOWN HERE...
BUT FOR ONCE PA'S LEFT THE BASEMENT DOOR UNLOCKED AND YOU JUST **CAN'T** RESIST LOOKING...
YOU ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS A TRAIN SET, AND IT IS IN A WAY, BUT PA'S DONE OTHER THINGS WITH THE TRACKS, AND HE'S USED OTHER THINGS TOO...
AND YOU STOOD THERE JUST LOOKING, JUST LOOKING...
PA...?
NO! IT'S NOT TRUE! PA BUILT A CORRECTION MACHINE TO DRIVE OUT THE **NORMALCY SNATCHERS**...
WASN'T THIS ONE OF YOUR PA'S CORRECTION MACHINES?
THIS, EVERY NIGHT, EVERY TIME YOU EVEN **LOOKED** LIKE BEING NAUGHTY OR DIRTY...
EVEN WHEN YOU WERE EIGHT YOU SENSED THERE WAS SOMETHING... MORE THAN JUST PUNISHMENT INVOLVED. YOU SAW THAT **ODD LIGHT** IN PA'S EYE AS HE LIFTED THE CANE AND...
NO... NO...
PA?
CHUCK?
I TOLD YOU NEVER TO COME DOWN HERE, CHUCK!

NOW YOU'VE SPOILED EVERYTHING.
NOW IT'S ALL GOT TO END.
PA PUT A *SHOTGUN* INTO HIS MOUTH THAT NIGHT. AFTER PUNISHING CHUCK ON THE MACHINE, OF COURSE. THEN HE MADE CHUCK WATCH.
APPARENTLY, HALF OF HIS PA'S FACE ENDED UP IN LITTLE CHUCK'S LAP.
JESUS.
SO ALL THE TIME KLEIN'S PA WAS IN THE BASEMENT, HE'D BEEN ABUSING AND PUNISHING HIMSELF ON THAT WEIRD MACHINE?
SOON AS CHUCK DESTROYED THE MACHINE, THE SPELL WAS BROKEN. CRYSTAL FALLS WENT BACK TO BEING THE WAY IT WAS...
... JUST A NORMAL TOWN FULL OF NORMALLY UNNORMAL PEOPLE...


BUT WHAT WAS CHUCK KLEIN'S PA PUNISHING HIMSELF *FOR*?
GOD KNOWS. I DIDN'T GO INTO IT.
LATER, CHUCK STARTED USING THE MACHINE ON HIMSELF, JUST LIKE HIS PA HAD DONE. HIS PA TOLD HIM HE MIGHT NEED TO USE IT ONE DAY.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING NOW?


STILL PRETTY WEIRD. IF I START DARNING YOUR SOCKS OR I TWIST MY ANKLE AND FALL OVER WHIMPERING "I CAN'T GO ON," JUST HIT ME, OKAY?
HOW DID HE FEEL ABOUT SMASHING THE MACHINE?


I THINK BY THEN HE WANTED TO. MAYBE HE KNEW SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
HE'D RIGGED THE MACHINE UP FOR THIS DAY. I THOUGHT HE WAS CLIMBING ON IT TO DESTROY IT...
THEN HE PULLED A LEVER AND THE MACHINE STARTED.


IT COLLAPSED IN ON HIM, WITH A KIND OF SIGH...
MAN AND MACHINE WENT OUT TOGETHER...
PAT. PEND.
...IN ONE SWIFT, PAINFUL, BLISSFUL MOMENT OF EXTREME PUNISHMENT...

INGENIOUS DESIGN. PULLEYS AND WINDING MECHANISMS.
OF COURSE, WHEN CHUCK HAD THE MADNESS IT BECAME BIGGER, MORE COMPLEX, RUN BY HIS OWN TWISTED MIND...
SPARE ME THE DETAILS.
ALL I REMEMBER IS SUDDENLY FINDING MYSELF WITH A PERM AND A BRA MADE OUT OF CAST IRON.
WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT WHAT *ELSE* HAPPENED HERE, ARE WE? ABOUT HOW MANY PEOPLE DIED FOR NOT BEING "NORMAL"...
NO. I SUPPOSE WE'RE NOT.
I GUESS THE WHOLE IDEA OF SOMETHING OR SOMEONE BEING NORMAL IS PRETTY PREPOSTEROUS ANYWAY, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT. WHAT ABOUT YOUR STUPID HANG-UP ABOUT DESERTING SAN FRANCISCO. WE TALKING ABOUT THAT?
NO. LATER. MY TOOTH HURTS TOO MUCH TO HAVE A SERIOUS DISCUSSION.
OKAY. JUST SO LONG AS WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT MY *DRINKING* EITHER.
DEAL.
LOOK AT IT, KATHY. WE'VE ALL AMERICA TO CHOOSE FROM, UNTIL THE MADNESS CALLS AGAIN. WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?
AHHHHH...
THAT WAY.
THE END.

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

SHADE THE CHANGING MAN

11

MAY 91

SHADE the Changing man

by milligan, bachalo & pennington

KILL KOPTER!
KILL KRAZY!
KILL!KILL!KILL!KILL!KILL!
McCARTHYISM

“ONCE YOU’VE TASTED THIS
YOU’RE HUNGRY FOREVER.
ALL OVER.”

HE CLIMBED THE STAIRS QUIETLY AT A FEW MINUTES BEFORE MIDNIGHT.
HE MUST HAVE WALKED QUICKLY INTO THE BEDROOM.
TURNED ON THE BEDSIDE LAMP. GRABBED MR. QUILTY'S HAIR. PULLED HIS HEAD BACK.
MADE AN INCISION FIVE INCHES WIDE BY TWO INCHES DEEP ACROSS HIS THROAT.
MRS. QUILTY WAS PROBABLY STILL HALF ASLEEP AND HAD MAYBE THIRTY SECONDS TO LIVE...
AT LEAST ONE HOPES IT WAS NO MORE THAN THIRTY SECONDS.
I'VE HEARD THE SOUND OF A MAN WITH HIS THROAT CUT, A PATHETIC FLAPPING AS HE TRIES TO BREATHE AND THE RIP IN THE WINDPIPE WON'T LET HIM...
HEARING THIS, MRS. QUILTY WAS DRAGGED FROM THE BED. I SHOULD IMAGINE SHE WAS SCREAMING.
I WOULD HAVE BEEN SCREAMING, AND THEY TELL ME I'M A COLD-BLOODED BASTARD.

...WHICH IS, OF COURSE, ABSOLUTELY TRUE.
STILL DON'T KNOW WHY WE'RE IN CHICAGO, MR. STRINGER. THOUGHT WE WERE DEALING EXCLUSIVELY WITH *THE MADNESS*, NOT SOME *NUT PSYCHO*.
HAVE YOU SEEN THE *BODY*, CONNOR? OF MRS. QUILTY?
NO, BUT I HEARD IT'S BAD.
IT'S NOT *BAD*, CONNOR. DECAPITATION IS BAD. CANNIBALISM IS BAD. FOUR WEEKS FLOATING IN A RIVER IS BAD...
MRS. Q'S BODY HAS BEEN THE RECEPTACLE OF SOMETHING ALTOGETHER *MADDER* THAN JUST *BAD*.

EDGE OF VISION

PART I

PETER MILLIGAN: WRITER
CHRIS BACHALO: PENCILLER
MARK PENNINGTON: INKER
DAN VOZZO: COLORIST
TODD KLEIN: LETTERER
TOM PEYER: ASST. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR

SHADE BASED ON THE CHARACTER CREATED BY STEVE DITKO

DO YOU SEE THAT?
YEAH. I SEE IT. LITTLE BASTARD.
I HATE THIS STUFF. I KNOW WE'RE TOLD TO IGNORE IT, BUT...
BUT THEY'RE CONSTANT REMINDERS THAT WE CREATE REALITY. AND WHEN THINGS START CHANGING IN OUR HEADS, **REALITY** STARTS CHANGING TOO.
IT'S A VERTIGINOUS KIND OF FEELING, ISN'T IT? STARING INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT OF ***NOTHING-REAL***.
PROBABLY DUE TO ***FALL-OUT*** FROM THE ***MENTAL HOSPITAL EXPLOSION***. MOST OF US HAVE GOT A MINUSCULE PART THE MADNESS IN US NOW...
I'D HOPED IT'D ACT LIKE SOME KIND OF ***INOCULATION***. IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE DOING SO.
I THINK THESE SOCIOPATH MURDERS MAY BE IMPORTANT, CONNOR.
THE MADNESS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. I HAVE A PREMONITION OF A BREAKTHROUGH HERE.
ARE ALL THE ADS IN?
YEAH. MOST BIG PAPERS. WE'RE RUNNING SOME ON NATIONAL TELEVISION, TOO. WHEREVER HE IS, WE'RE BOUND TO REACH HIM.
GOOD. DON'T DESPAIR, CONNOR. WE ARE LIVING IN EXCITING TIMES.
TELL THAT TO MRS. QUILTY.
I'D RATHER TELL IT TO SHADE.

...A MESSAGE FOR SHADE. KATHY WILL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT ME. WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE. WE HAVE TO FIGHT THE MADNESS TOGETHER...
...AND THEN IT GIVES A PHONE NUMBER. HE WANTS TO MEET YOU.
I'VE TOLD YOU ALL I KNOW ABOUT STRINGER. IT'S NOT MUCH.
AND NOT ENOUGH. IT COULD BE A *TRAP.*
Chicago Times
I'VE SPOKEN TO LENNY IN NEW YORK. SHE SAYS THINGS ARE THE SAME THERE. LITTLE WISPS OF INSANITY. STRANGE VISIONS, ODD INSANITY.
THEY'RE JUST THE ECHOES OF THE BIG MADNESS. ONCE THE *AMERICAN SCREAM* GOES, THE REST WILL GO TOO.
THEN MAYBE I CAN BUILD SOMEWHERE BEAUTIFUL FOR THE TWO OF US. A LITTLE PARADISE...
HOW ARE WE GOING TO MAKE IT GO, SHADE? I MEAN, WE JUST SEEM TO BE HANGING ONTO ITS COAT TAILS. WE'RE NOT MAKING ANY PROGRESS.
I'M GETTING BETTER AT USING THE MADNESS VEST. WHEN I'M READY I'M GOING BACK TO *META*...
YOU'RE *WHAT?*
JUST FOR A WHILE. FIND OUT AS MUCH AS I CAN ABOUT THE MADNESS AND THE VEST. FIND OUT THE TRUTH.
THEN COME BACK AND... AND DO WHATEVER I HAVE TO DO.

THERE'S STILL A NEWS BLACKOUT ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO. WHEN ARE WE GOING BACK *THERE?*
AFTER I'VE BEEN TO META. IT'S GOING TO BE HELL IN SAN FRANCISCO AND I WANT TO BE READY. THE MADNESS HAS WON THERE. IT'S THE AMERICAN SCREAM'S TERRITORY.
JESUS...
WHAT IS IT?
ANOTHER DOUBLE KILLING. SECOND DAY RUNNING.
WE DON'T NEED THE AMERICAN SCREAM TO GIVE US MADNESS. WE GOT QUITE ENOUGH AS IT IS...
THAT'S RIGHT. WE WAIT FOR PSYCHO TO DO IT AGAIN OR FOR SHADE TO CONTACT US.
BOTH CHICAGO MURDERS HAPPENED AROUND MIDNIGHT, MR. STRINGER...
...IF HE'S STICKING TO THE SCRIPT, WE'VE ONE HOUR TO STOP HIM.
WE *CAN'T* STOP HIM. NOT YET. NOT WITHOUT SHADE.
IT'S ODD. SOMEWHERE RIGHT NOW HIS NEXT VICTIM MAY BE GOING TO BED. BRUSHING HER TEETH. DOING ANY ONE OF A MILLION ORDINARY THINGS.
AND IN SIXTY MINUTES SHE'LL BE IN A NIGHTMARE.

YOU'RE WEARING A HOLE IN THE CARPET, SHADE. WHAT'S WRONG?
I MEAN, APART FROM ALL THE *OTHER* THINGS THAT ARE WRONG?
I DON'T KNOW. I CAN'T STOP SHAKING. DON'T *YOU* FEEL ANYTHING?
JUST SLEEPY. MAYBE IT'S THE MADNESS AFFECTING YOU. IT HASN'T LET US ALONE THIS LONG BEFORE. THREE NIGHTS WE'VE BEEN HERE...
I DON'T KNOW. HOW *CAN* YOU KNOW WITH THE MADNESS?
MAYBE THIS *IS* THE MADNESS. YOU, ME, THE MADNESS VEST...
DON'T, SHADE. THAT'S SCARY AND STUPID.
I'M SORRY. LOOK, I'M GOING FOR A WALK. TRY TO CLEAR MY HEAD.
I FEEL A LITTLE SICK OR SOMETHING...
IS IT YOUR STOMACH, PAT?
DON'T SOUND SO GODDAMN SMUG. I TOLD YOU I CAN'T TAKE SPICY FOOD...
AND I SUPPOSE ALL THAT BEER YOU GUZZLED HAS GOT NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH IT.
YOU DON'T EXPECT ME TO SPEND AN EVENING WITH YOUR IDIOT FRIENDS COMPLETELY SOBER, DO YOU?
SLOB.
I *HEARD* THAT.

I'M HOT INSIDE.
I'M HUNGRY ALL OVER.
ONCE YOU'VE TASTED THIS YOU'RE HUNGRY FOREVER. ALL OVER.
I CAN SMELL THEIR NICENESS. NICE PEOPLE. ALWAYS HATED NICE PEOPLE. NICE HOUSES. NICE KIDS.
NICE WIVES.
NICE TO SEE THEIR NICENESS DISAPPEARING, LIKE A PIG IN MARSH GAS.
I SEEN A PIG DISAPPEAR IN MARSH GAS. NEVER COMES BACK. SOMETIMES YOU HEAR IT SQUEALING.
I LIKE TO HEAR THEM SQUEALING.
HE'S GOING TO THE JOHN. IN HIS NICE PAJAMAS.
IT'S ONE MINUTE TO MIDNIGHT.
I'M SO HUNGRY.

THIRTY SECONDS TO MIDNIGHT.
HE'LL BE WELL INSIDE SOME HOUSE BY NOW...
"...WHENEVER THERE'S BEEN A MAN PRESENT HE'S TAKEN HIM OUT FIRST..."
HUH?
...USUALLY BY SLITTING THE MAN'S THROAT WITH A KNIFE.
THOUGH IN NEW YORK HE RAMMED A SCREWDRIVER UP A MAN'S NOSTRIL UNTIL IT TOUCHED THE ROOF OF HIS SKULL...
JEEE ZUS...
"...WHAT A SWEETHEART."
I'VE A THEORY, CONNOR. MAKE SURE THIS IS ON TOMORROW'S NEWS...
"...I WANT TO SHARE THE THEORY WITH SHADE..."
PAT? YOU THROWING UP AGAIN?
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT MAKING A MESS OF THE NEW BATHROOM CARPET...
KKKK KKK KKK KKAAKKK...

I'VE GOT NO SYMPATHY FOR YOU. I TOLD YOU TO STOP DRINKING AND YOU TOLD ME TO MIND MY OWN...
PAT?
THE BEDROOM SMELLS LIKE PERFUME.
SHE HAS A NICE MOUTH. A VERY NICE MOUTH.
I JUST KNOW IT'S GONNA TASTE OF CHOCOLATE AND TOOTHPASTE...
HHUUU... HHUUU... HHUUU...
THERE'S A SOUND BEHIND ME. THE U.S. CAVALRY...
WITH HIS NECK ALL OPEN AND HIS PANTS AROUND HIS ANKLES...
HE TAKES TWO STEPS INTO THE BEDROOM. HE'S TRYING TO PROTECT HIS WIFE EVEN THOUGH SHE *DOES* SOUND LIKE A BITCH...
HE COLLAPSES, SO I LET HIM LIE THERE AND HOPE HE LIVES LONG ENOUGH TO WATCH...
...AND SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO REALLY LIVE. TO REALLY BE OUT THERE.

I *TOLD* YOU YOU DIDN'T WANT TO LOOK AT HER, CONNOR.
UNMMMPHHH...
TURN ON THE TELEVISION.
MY LITTLE THEORY SHOULD BE ON...
A POLICE SOURCE HAS RELEASED SOME FACTS ABOUT THE KILLER OF NOW SIX PEOPLE IN THREE NIGHTS HERE IN CHICAGO.
THE KILLER IS BEING LINKED TO OTHER SIMILAR KILLINGS ACROSS THE COUNTRY...
THE FIRST NAMES OF ALL HIS FEMALE VICTIMS BEGIN WITH THE LETTER *K*...
...THE KILLER *MAY* BE OBSESSED WITH NOTORIOUS *MULTIPLE MURDERER TROY GRENZER*, WHO WAS RECENTLY EXECUTED IN LOUISIANA.
CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLAYINGS POINT TO *COPY CAT* KILLINGS. AND NOW TODAY'S SPORTS...
KLIK.
OH GOD.

OH GOD. HE'S NEVER GONNA LET ME GO. IT'S NEVER GOING TO BE OVER. EVERY NIGHT HE USED TO COME TO ME, EVERY NIGHT...
PASS ME THE PAPER.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? ALL THE WOMEN'S NAMES START WITH K. K FOR KATHY. HE'S AFTER ME...
NO ONE'S AFTER YOU. IT'S A COINCIDENCE.
AT WORST MAYBE THIS KILLER GOT YOUR NAME FROM THE PAPERS AND IT'S SOME KIND OF SICK JOKE.
HE'S NOT GOING TO HURT YOU, KATHY...
BELIEVE ME. THAT'S ALL OVER. THIS ISN'T TROY GRENZER. GRENZER'S DEAD. THIS IS JUST A PSYCHO.
LOOK, I'LL PHONE STRINGER. I'LL HELP HIM CATCH THIS KILLER AND THEN WE'LL LEAVE CHICAGO.
IS THAT OKAY?
DRNGG DRNGG
Y-YEAH. OKAY, BUT CATCH HIM SOON, SHADE.
J-JESUS... I'M SHAKING LIKE SHIT...
DRNNG DRRNGG
HELLO? OH, HI. NO, SHE'S OKAY. YES, YES, I THINK THAT'S A GOOD IDEA.
WAIT A MOMENT, I'LL PUT HER ON...
IT'S LENNY FROM NEW YORK. SHE SAW THE NEWS TOO. SAYS SHE'S GETTING ON A PLANE FOR CHICAGO TO BE WITH YOU.
WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED SPEAKING I'LL CALL STRINGER.

SORRY ABOUT ALL THE QUESTIONS THE PHONE OPERATOR ASKED YOU. HAD TO WEED OUT THE NUT CALLS.
WE'VE HAD OVER TWO HUNDRED SINCE THE AD FIRST APPEARED.
COINCIDENCE, ISN'T IT? US BOTH BEING HERE IN CHICAGO?
NO, THE KILLINGS ARE CONNECTED TO THE MADNESS, AND SO ARE YOU.
BEFORE I TELL YOU ABOUT THAT I WANT TO EXPLAIN MY IDEAS ON THE MADNESS AND ITS LINKS WITH **CANCER**.
THERE IS SOMETHING CALLED THE **HAYFLICK LIMIT**, WHICH IS THE AMOUNT OF TIMES A SINGLE CELL CAN MULTIPLY BEFORE DYING.
WHAT SEEMS TO HAPPEN IN CANCER IS THE CELL EXCEEDS THE HAYFLICK LIMIT, SHAKES OFF THE SPECIES ORDER, AND RUNS RIOT.
THE MADNESS IS A CANCER OF REALITY, OR RATHER, CANCER IS A **LITTLE** MADNESS OF THE CELLS...
DO YOU **HAVE** CANCER WHERE YOU COME FROM?
I HAVEN'T COME TO TALK ABOUT WHERE I COME FROM, STRINGER.
WHY ARE YOU SO CONVINCED THESE **KILLINGS** ARE LINKED TO THE MADNESS?
SIMPLE.
THERE'S BEEN A KILLING MOST PLACES WHERE THE MADNESS HAS STRUCK.

THERE WAS A KILLING IN DALLAS, ARIZONA, L.A., NEW YORK. NOT SURE ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO.
EXIT
YOU WOULDN'T BE. YOU BLEW IT UP...
ONLY A SMALL PART OF IT. TO STOP THE MADNESS SPREADING.
SEE, SHADE, WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE.
MAYBE. WHAT ELSE MAKES YOU LINK THE KILLINGS WITH THE MADNESS?
THE WAY HE KILLS THE WOMEN. THE MEN ARE JUST REGULAR KILLINGS, BUT THE WOMEN...
WELL, YOU'LL SEE WHAT I MEAN WHEN YOU SEE THE BODY.
IT'S LIKE THE KILLER HAS KILLED THEM FROM INSIDE, HAS MOVED INTO THEM AND HAS TAKEN THEM APART, PIECE BY PIECE...
EVERY ORGAN, FIBER, CELL HAS BEEN DAMAGED. NO, MORE THAN JUST DAMAGED...
IT'S AS THOUGH SHE'S BEEN SLOWLY *UNDONE*.
IT'S NOT EASY TO LOOK AT, IS IT?
HAHHAHHAH

WHO LAUGHED? WHICH ONE OF YOU LAUGHED...?
NOT ME.
I HEARD IT TOO. MAYBE IT WAS THE *BODY*...
THE BODY?
SOMETIMES THERE'S A LITTLE AIR LEFT IN IT. KINDA SPOOKY WHEN IT ESCAPES.
SHIT, I AIN'T NEVER HEARD IT SOUND LIKE *LAUGHING* BEFORE, THOUGH.
I'M GOING TO STICK TO BEER. AND NOT TOO MANY. I'M GOING TO MAKE AN EFFORT.
IT'LL BE GOOD TO SEE LENNY AGAIN.
GIVE ME SOMEONE TO TALK TO WHILE SHADE'S DOING WHATEVER HE'S DOING.
JESUS, WHAT **AM** I SUPPOSED TO DO WHILE HE'S "WORKING"? I CAN'T HELP HIM, BUT HE SAYS HE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT ME...
CHICAGO BULLS
BEA
CHICAGO ...ACK
JUST WAITING AROUND DRIVES ME CRAZY. I COULD WALK AWAY NOW, BUT WHAT ELSE WOULD I DO?
GO BACK TO BUMMING AROUND THE COUNTRY?
GREYHOUNDS. CHEAP MOTELS. ONE NIGHT STANDS. BOURBON AND BOREDOM?
SOMETIMES I FEEL IF THE WIND BLOWS TOO HARD IT'LL CARRY ME CLEAN AWAY.

THE PLEASURE. THAT'S THE WORST PART. I'M DRINKING IN THE PAIN AND THE FEAR AND THE NIGHTMARE, BUT ALSO THE PLEASURE...
THE HUNGER. THE HOT HUNGER.
IT WAS HERE THAT HE ENTERED HER. I... CAN'T SEE HIM YET...
SHE WAS TOO SCARED TO FIGHT OR SCREAM AS HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND...
OH GOD...
I GOT CLOSE. FOR A MOMENT I... I *WAS* HIM...
JESUS, WAS THAT HER? I SAW HER!
CLOSED HIS EYES AND SHIVERED AS HE PRESSED HIS BODY AGAINST HER NICE NICE BODY AND HER NICE HER VERY NICE MOUTH...
YES. IT DOES TASTE OF CHOCOLATE AND TOOTHPASTE.
I LET MYSELF OPEN. MY SKIN MOVES INTO AND THROUGH HER TREMBLING SURFACES...
HER SHADOWY HOLLOWS AND SECRET HIDING PLACES AND...
AAIIIEEE!

MY GOD. I FELT THAT. I FELT THAT TOO. YOU PASSED IT ON TO ME. THIS IS *INCREDIBLE!*
DON'T STOP, SHADE, CARRY ON...
LAY OFF, STRINGER. I'VE GOT A HOOK INTO HIM AND THAT'S ENOUGH. I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE *ENJOYING* IT...
WE'VE SIX HOURS BEFORE MIDNIGHT. WE'LL MEET AT TEN. I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO HOME IN ON HIS HUNGER.
GIVE ME YOUR ADDRESS, IN CASE I NEED TO CONTACT...
NO WAY. AND IF I'M FOLLOWED YOU DON'T SEE ME AGAIN.
I WANT A *GUN,* STRINGER...
OF COURSE. THIS WILL BE FOR KATHY. HOW IS SHE? A VERY ATTRACTIVE YOUNG LADY, YOUR KATHY.
ARE YOU GOING TO TELL HER THAT WE THINK THE KILLER REALLY BELIEVES HE *IS* TROY GRENZER? ARE YOU GOING TO TELL HER THAT SOONER OR LATER HE'LL ALMOST DEFINITELY COME *LOOKING* FOR HER?
YOU KNOW, SHADE. WE OUGHT TO BE FRIENDS. WE HAVE A LOT IN COMMON. WE'RE BOTH FIGHTING THE MADNESS.
I'VE SO MANY QUESTIONS I WANT TO ASK YOU, WHERE YOU COME FROM, HOW YOU DO WHAT YOU DO.
I'M SURE YOU HAVE LOTS OF THINGS *YOU'D* LIKE TO ASK *ME*.
NOT REALLY.

THANKS FOR COMING, LENNY.
I WAS JUST TELLING KATHY ABOUT THAT *THING* YOU LEFT IN MY APARTMENT. I SOLD IT TO A GALLERY IN THE VILLAGE FOR *TWO THOU*.
HEY--HOW DID IT GO, SHADE?
IT'LL ALL BE CLEARED UP BY TONIGHT. THEN WE CAN MOVE ON.
DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO DRINK, LENNY? I FEEL KIND OF COLD.
WHAT ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS KILLER AND TROY GRENZER?
THERE *IS* NO CONNECTION. STRINGER MADE THAT UP SO I'D CONTACT HIM.
ALL THAT FIRST NAME BEGINNING WITH K IS BULLSHIT, TOO, SO YOU CAN STOP WORRYING.
HERE, KATHY. TAKE THIS GUN. I'LL TAKE *THAT*.
IF I'VE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, WHY DO I NEED THIS?
JUST A PRECAUTION. THESE ARE VERY WEIRD TIMES.
ALWAYS THE HARDEST, ISN'T IT?
AFTER THAT THEY GET EASIER. THEY JUST START TO COME NATURAL.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
LYING, SHADE. I GUESS THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE REALLY *LIED* TO ME.
NOW TELL ME WHERE TROY GRENZER FITS INTO ALL THIS.

IT'S TWENTY TO TWELVE. THERE'S A HELICOPTER WAITING OUTSIDE.
I TOLD KATHY THE TRUTH. SHE JUST NODDED AND CARRIED ON TALKING WITH LENNY.
I DISLIKE STRINGER MORE THAN I SHOULD. MAYBE IT'S SOME SCENT OR AURA HE GIVES OFF...
PICKING UP ANYTHING YET? WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME. YOU'VE BEEN SITTING LIKE THIS OVER AN HOUR NOW...
BEING WITH HIM IS LIKE STANDING NEXT TO AN OPEN GRAVE.
I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU, KATHY...
HOW CHARMING. BUT HAVE YOU HOOKED ONTO OUR PSYCHO YET?
THE HOUSE IS DARK EXCEPT FOR A LIGHT IN THE HALL AND ONE DIMMER LIGHT IN AN UPSTAIRS WINDOW. THAT'LL BE THE BEDROOM.
I BET IT'S A NICE BEDROOM. A REAL NICE BEDROOM. KNOW WHY I HATE NICE BEDROOMS?
THE HOUSE, SHADE. CONCENTRATE ON THE HOUSE. WHAT DOES IT **LOOK** LIKE? IS THERE A **STREET SIGN** NEARBY?
A STREET SIGN... THE HOUSE... A SHADOW MOVING PASSED THE LIGHT...
IT'S COMING... I'M STARTING TO SEE...
"IT'S A NICE HOUSE. A GOOD AREA. LAWN OUT FRONT. CAR IN THE DRIVE..."
"I'M... I MEAN THE KILLER... IS WATCHING THE HOUSE. WAITING. MY, **HIS** HUNGER GROWING..."

YES, MICHAEL. I MISS YOU TOO. NO, I'M **NOT** NAKED. I'VE JUST GOT UP TO LOOK OUT THE WINDOW...
OH, NOTHING. THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING. MORE TOMS, I GUESS. SAMMY'S IN HEAT...
HAH HAH HAH.
WELL ***YOU'LL*** JUST HAVE TO ***WAIT*** 'TIL YOU'RE ***HOME*** AGAIN, WON'T YOU?
"...HE'S CLOSE..."
...HE KNOWS SHE'S IN THERE. HE CAN FEEL HER ALREADY.
OH GOD, THE HUNGER'S DEEP...
LOOK AROUND. MAKE HIM LOOK AROUND. WE NEED A STREET SIGN.
"THE STREET IS LONG AND DARK. A SIGN. ACROSS THE WAY, A STREET SIGN. IT'S TOO FAR... TO SEE..."
"LOOK CLOSER! YOU CAN DO IT. ***FOCUS*** ON IT, SHADE. ***CLOSER***..."
WHAT'S UP, PUSS? ONE OF YOUR BOYFRIENDS OUTSIDE?

CASEY ST.
MILTON
"...CASEY STREET... MILTON AVENUE..."
"I CAN SEE IT... MILTON AVENUE AND CASEY STREET..."
STOP
THE CHOPPER'S READY FOR US. I'LL GET SOME CARS AROUND THERE...
NO! WE WANNA CATCH HIM, NOT SCARE HIM AWAY!
BUT THE WOMAN...?
NO CARS!
I JUST KNOW IT'LL BE A NICE BEDROOM. I CAN SMELL HER.
I CAN'T WAIT.
I'M STARTING TO MELT AREADY.

WHAT'S THE NUMBER OF THE HOUSE?
I DON'T KNOW. I'LL KNOW THE HOUSE WHEN WE GET THERE. AND STRINGER...
...I GO IN ALONE. I'M NOT SURE WHAT I'LL FIND IN THERE, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S QUITE *HUMAN*.
I'M NOT BEING BRAVE HERE. I'M VERY SCARED, BUT I OPERATE BETTER WHEN I'M ON MY OWN...
WHO'S... WHO'S THAT...?
DAD? DAD, IS THAT YOU? PLEASE, DAD...
I'VE BEEN THINKING, SHADE. DON'T TAKE THIS PERSONALLY, BUT... WHAT IF *YOU'RE* THE KILLER?
YOU'VE BEEN EVERY PLACE THE KILLER'S BEEN. YOU CERTAINLY HAVE THE ABILITY...
STOP
MAYBE WE'RE JUST CHAUFFEURING YOU TO YOUR NEXT VICTIM. YOU GO IN ALONE, KILL HER, COME OUT AND TELL US WE WERE TOO LATE.
YOU'RE SICK, STRINGER.
IT'S ONLY MY LITTLE JOKE, SHADE. OF *COURSE* YOU'RE NOT THE KILLER.
IT'S AN AMUSING THOUGHT THOUGH, ISN'T IT?

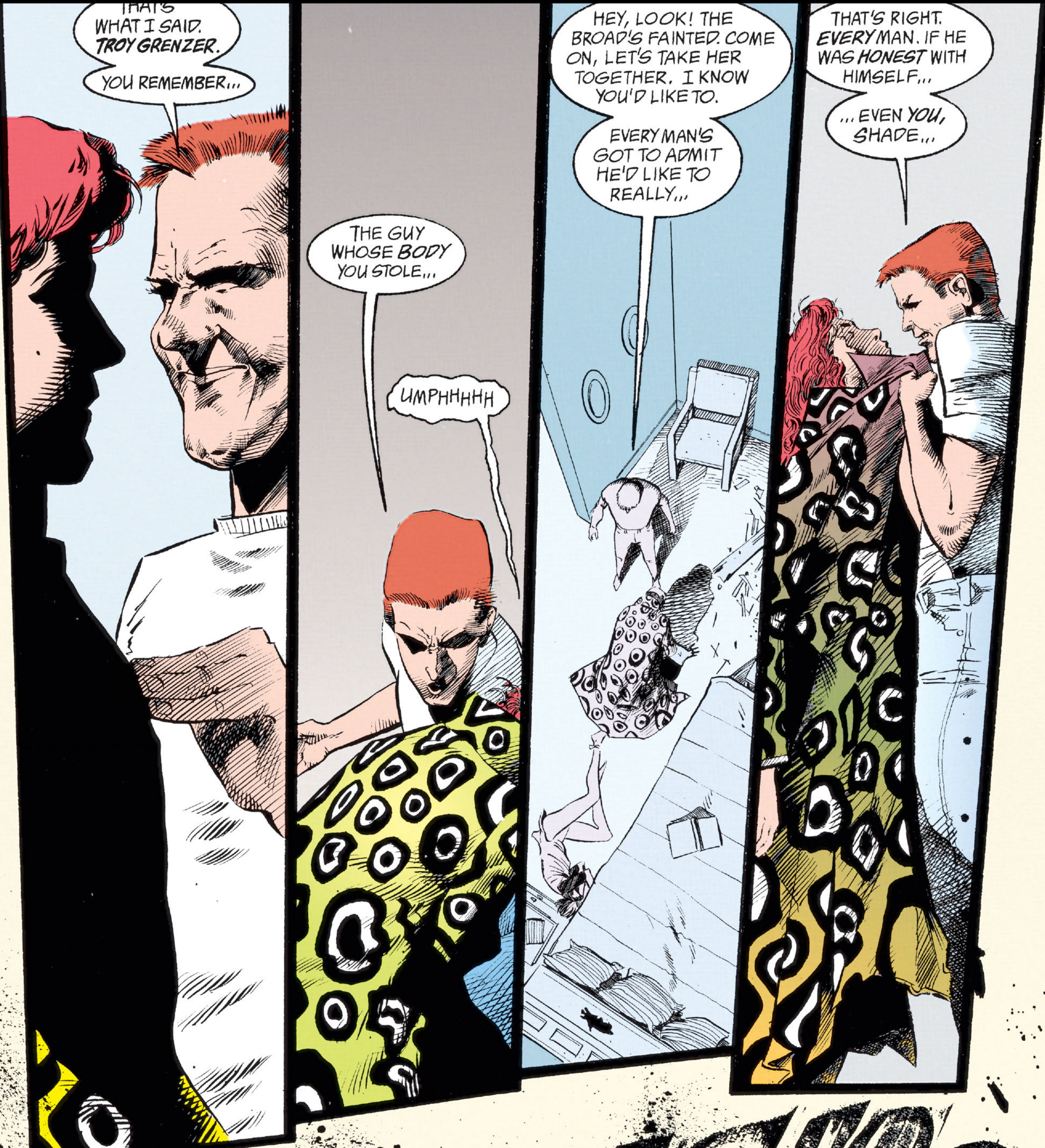
I KNOW YOU'RE THERE. I KNOW YOU'RE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR. IT'S LOCKED, SO JUST GO AWAY...
OH CHRIST, PLEASE GO AWAY...
14521
I'VE GOT A GUN! THE POLICE'LL BE HERE ANY SECOND AND I'VE GOT A GUN!
I GET TO THE ***FRONT*** DOOR OF THE ***HOUSE*** AND THINK: ***ARIZONA.***
AND I FEEL MY SANITY SNEAKING OUT THE ***BACK*** DOOR OF MY ***MIND...***
HE SAID THERE'D BEEN A KILLING IN ARIZONA, BUT THE ***MADNESS*** WASN'T THERE. ONLY THE ***MADNESS STREAM.***
AND ME. ***AND ME!***
I'M THE KILLER. I HAVEN'T BEEN HOMING IN ON THE KILLER STALKING THIS HOUSE...
...I'VE BEEN FORESEEING MY OWN ACTIONS. MY NEXT KILLING. PROJECTING THAT. ***I HAVE THE ABILITY...***

NO. NO, THAT'S *STUPID*. I'M NOT A KILLER. I'M...
OH GOD... BUT THAT *HUNGER*...
AIEEEEE!
GET AWAY! GET AWAY FROM ME!
IT'S... IT'S OKAY. I'M HERE TO HELP.
WHERE DID HE GO?
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU! OH GOD PLEASE DON'T HURT ME. JUST TAKE ANYTHING YOU WANT BUT DON'T HURT ME...
I DON'T WANT TO... I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU...
I'M HERE TO HELP...
AND THEN I HEAR IT.
HAHHAH HAHHAH
WHERE DID I HEAR THAT BEFORE?
OF COURSE. LOOKING AT THE BODY, THAT TERRIBLE BODY...
...I TURN, LIKE A MAN OF STONE...

HI, SHADE. BET YOU DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE GOOD OL' **TROY GRENZER** AGAIN, HUH?
BY THE WAY, HOW ***IS*** KATHY?
To Be Continued...

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
DC
SHADE THE CHANGING MAN
12
JUN 91
SHADE the ChaNgiNG man
peter milligan chris bachalo mark pennington
tastes Bad
THE LOOK of DEATH IS IN YOUR EYES

“DON’T ASK ANY MORE
QUESTIONS, KATHY.
YOU MIGHT NOT LIKE
THE ANSWERS.”


THAT'S WHAT I SAID. TROY GRENZER.
YOU REMEMBER...
THE GUY WHOSE BODY YOU STOLE...
UMPHHHHH
HEY, LOOK! THE BROAD'S FAINTED. COME ON, LET'S TAKE HER TOGETHER. I KNOW YOU'D LIKE TO.
EVERY MAN'S GOT TO ADMIT HE'D LIKE TO REALLY...
THAT'S RIGHT. EVERY MAN. IF HE WAS HONEST WITH HIMSELF...
...EVEN YOU, SHADE...

EDGE OF VISION

PART II.

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NO!
YOU CAN'T BE TROY GRENZER. HE'S DEAD...
OH, BUT HE AIN'T. THOUGH AFTER GETTING FRIED HE WAS SO LITTLE HE WAS GOOD AS DEAD, AND SO DEEP INSIDE HIS BODY HE WAS GOOD AS LOST.
BUT THEN I STARTED TO GROW AND GET STRONGER.
AND I REALIZED THAT SOME MOTHER HAD STOLEN MY BODY...
YOU EVEN CHANGED HOW I LOOKED, DIDN'T YOU? SHIT, CALL THAT AN IMPROVEMENT?
YOUR ASS WOULDN'T LAST TWO DAYS IN STIR LIKE THAT. YOU'D BE A COMMUNAL TOILET...
I'M SICK OF HAVING MY BODY USED BY A STREAK OF ALIEN PISS LIKE YOU. I'VE BIDED MY TIME. WAITED 'TIL I WAS STRONG ENOUGH...
NOW I WANT MY BODY BACK.

VERY CLEVER. BUT I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D GIVE UP THE BODY WITHOUT A FIGHT.
I RECKON THIS SHOWS YOU'RE PANICKING A LITTLE THOUGH, BOY...
YEAH, YEAH. VERY CUTE. I'VE BEEN ON THE CHAIR BEFORE, THOUGH. IT AIN'T SO HOT...
HOW ARE YOU DOING IT? HOW ARE YOU EXISTING OUTSIDE OF THIS BODY?
HOW ARE YOU KILLING THOSE WOMEN LIKE THAT?
YOU AIN'T THE ONLY ONE'S LEARNED HOW TO HARNESS THE POWER OF MADNESS A LITTLE.
TOOK ME A WHILE TO BE ABLE TO KEEP A BODY TOGETHER MORE THAN A FEW SECONDS...
NOW I'M REALLY GETTING THE HANG OF IT...
IT'S SIMPLE, SEE. THIS BODY'S AN EXTENSION OF THE ME THAT'S STILL INSIDE YOU...
...OR RATHER THAT'S STILL INSIDE MY BODY THAT YOU'VE HIJACKED,
I MIGHT NOT BE AS FANCY AS YOU YET WITH THE MADNESS, BUT I'M GETTING BETTER.
AND AS FOR WHAT I DO TO THE WOMEN, HOW I MOVE INSIDE THEM...
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT, SHADE.
BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU FELT WHEN YOU WERE TRYING TO TRACK ME DOWN.
ONLY YOU WERE TOO SCARED TO LET YOURSELF GO AND REALLY FEEL IT, IN CASE YOU LIKED IT SO MUCH YOU DIDN'T WANT TO COME BACK...

DON'T TOUCH HER...
HEY! LISTEN! I'M A REASONABLE MAN. I'M WILLING TO MAKE A COMPROMISE, A PARTNERSHIP.
WE'LL SHARE THE GODDAMN BODY. HELL, THERE'S ROOM FOR TWO...
YOU'RE INSANE, GRENZER.
OKAY, IN THAT CASE I'LL HAVE TO TAKE COMPLETE CONTROL. AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY YOU CAN STOP ME AND THAT'S BY KILLING YOURSELF AND OUR BODY... DO YOU HAVE THE GUTS FOR THAT?
NAH. I DON'T THINK SO...
H-HUH? GRENZER?
GRENZER... WHERE...
HERE, SHADE.
WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS LATER.

SIR!
MY GOD.
IT'S HIM...
HOW COME YOU'VE GOT SO MANY BOOKS?
I DON'T LIKE CHICAGO CAB-DRIVERS.
I MEAN, I DON'T LIKE HOLDING THEM UP. NOT THE SAME AS NEW YORK CABBIES.
SO I SAW HOW MANY BOOKS I COULD LIFT FROM THE AIRPORT BOOKSTORE. I TELL YOU, THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE WAS A REAL BITCH TO HIDE...
DICTIONARY
HOLMES.S
POE
SHAKESPEARE
WOO
FRENCH
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE, LENNY. I HAVEN'T KNOWN YOU LONG, BUT IT'S LIKE YOU'RE A REAL CLOSE FRIEND ALREADY.
AND I'M NOT, I SUPPOSE?

JESUS! SHADE!... I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN! HOW DID IT GO?
DID YOU CATCH...
YEAH. EVERYTHING'S OKAY. BUT I'M REAL TIRED. I JUST WANT TO HIT THE SACK.
OH. RIGHT.
I'LL SEE YOU GUYS IN THE MORNING THEN...
SO WHO **WAS** HE? WHO WAS THE KILLER?
RELAX. HE WAS JUST A NUT WHO'D READ ALL ABOUT GRENZER. HERO-WORSHIPPED HIM. CALLED HIM THE GREAT AMERICAN HERO...
CLAIMED HE WAS TRYING TO CARRY ON GRENZER'S GOOD WORK...
BUT WHY DID ALL THE FEMALE VICTIMS HAVE NAMES BEGINNING WITH K?
AH. HE'D READ ABOUT YOU, KATHY. GOT IT IN HIS MIND THAT YOU WERE THE LAST ONE, THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY.
OH CHRIST...
BUT IT'S OVER NOW. STRINGER SHOT HIM. YOU'RE SAFE NOW. I'M HERE.
HEY.
TRUST ME...

TROY GRENZER'S SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD, BUT WE SEE HIM LEAVING THE HOUSE. SHADE'S SUPPOSED TO BE HELPING US BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF HIM.
MAYBE THINGS ARE HAPPENING ALL AROUND US THAT WERE MEANT TO HAPPEN, ONLY WE CAN'T SEE THEM.
MAYBE SHADE IS STILL IN THE HOUSE IN AN INVISIBLE FORM STRUGGLING WITH OUR KILLER...
YEAH, AND MAYBE SHADE IS THE KILLER AFTER ALL.
YOU KNOW, EVER SINCE GRENZER'S EXECUTION WENT WEIRD MY WHOLE LIFE HAS CEASED TO MAKE ANY SENSE.
THAT'S STRANGE, CONNOR.
MY LIFE STARTED MAKING SENSE AT THAT POINT.
I HAVE A PREARRANGED MEETING WITH SHADE AT TEN A.M. TOMORROW. WE SHALL SEE IF HE KEEPS THE APPOINTMENT.
I'M HOT. I'M A FIRE. I'M A FURNACE. I'M A SUN.
I WANT TO EAT THE WHOLE WORLD.
IT'S NOT JUST ANY HUNGER. IT'S A HUNGER THAT EATS AT EVERY PART OF ME UNTIL I FEED IT.
I CAN FEEL HER SITTING ON THE SIDE OF HER BED AND THE HUNGER IS HURTING ME.

SANTA FE IS A CITY OF COINCIDENCES. STRANGE CONNECTIONS SEEM TO OCCUR QUITE NATURALLY HERE.
IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO CROSS, SAY, THE PLAZA DE SANTA FE WITHOUT HEARING SOMETHING THAT ONLY SECONDS EARLIER YOU HAVE BEEN THINKING...
A SIMPLE INDIAN TRINKET MIGHT TRIGGER A MONTH OF INTRICATE SYNCHRONICITY, ENDING IN THE DEATH OF A RELATIVE OR THE WINNING OF A CARD GAME...
IF COINCIDENCES ARE THE VISIBLE SURFACE OF AN OCEAN OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS THAT RUNS THROUGH ALL LIFE, THEN IN SANTA FE THAT OCEAN PARTS AND CONTINUOUSLY WASHES OVER ONE...
SANTA FE WAS ALSO THE FIRST FOREIGN CAPITAL TO FALL TO THE U.S. ARMY, IN THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR...
AH, MY TABLETS.
THANK YOU, GUILGUD...
NO ONE IS FREE IN SANTA FE. WE ARE SCARECROWS DANCING ON ELECTRIC FENCES.
THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM OUR GUILT AND THE PUNISHMENT WE DESERVE...

SHADE... I...
SHHHH.
AHHHHH...
AHHHHH...
HUMPH.
HER SKIN IS DARK. I CAN SEE IT GLISTENING.
HER HAIR WILL TASTE OF COCONUT OIL...
AHHHH...
BUT NOW SOMETHING STOPS ME. EATS AT MY WILL TO GO ON...
A LITTLE WAVE OF PITY FOR THE GIRL IN THE ROOM UP AHEAD LIKE WATER DOUSING MY HOT HUNGER...

A TINGLING DOWN MY SPINE. SOMETHING MAD. A STREAM OF MADNESS...
THE MADNESS STREAM. NO. NOT FOR ME. NOT FOR *TROY*...
FOR *SHADE*: THE MADNESS STREAM, AN UMBILICAL CORD... LINKING SHADE TO THE MADNESS. SHADE, NOT TROY...
I'M *SHADE*... NOT *TROY*.
SHADE. OH GOD. SHADE. I'M SHADE. HE TRICKED ME. I UNDERESTIMATED HIM.
I CAN'T STAY HERE. HAVE TO PULL BACK. IF I WAS TROY THEN TROY WAS...
OH GOD. KATHY...
KATHY...

KATHY?
KATHY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HMMM? SHADE?
UHHHNNNN... WHAT'S WRONG? COME BACK TO BED...
BACK TO...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, COME BACK TO BED?
I'M GETTING COLD.
YOU MEAN, I WAS HERE EARLIER? I'VE BEEN HERE TONIGHT?
YOU KNOW, I DIDN'T THINK IT'D BE SO GOOD.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU WERE WILDER THAN I THOUGHT YOU'D BE. I OFTEN WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE WITH YOU THE FIRST TIME...
I GUESS YOU ALWAYS SEEMED A LITTLE... A LITTLE SCARED AND TIMID.
WHERE'RE YOU GOING? I SAY SOMETHING WRONG? IT WAS GREAT. DON'T GET SO TOUCHY...
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG. I'M GOING TO THE BATHROOM.

UHH... UHHH... HHGGHH...
...A LITTLE SCARED AND TIMID...
HEY, PRETTY BOY, THAT KATHY OF YOURS IS REALLY SOMETHING...
IS THIS SOME KIND OF BIZARRE ALIEN POST-COITAL THING?

OH. IT'S YOU.
YOU'RE EARLY.
I SAW GRENZER. DOES THIS MEAN HE'S STILL AROUND?
LET ME GUESS: YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN RID OF HIM YET. SOME SMALL PART OF HIM IS INSIDE YOU. RIGHT?
CLOSE.
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU SUDDENLY LOOK A LITTLE WORRIED.
WHAT? NO, NO, I'M NOT WORRIED...
WELL, YOU SHOULD BE, COP.
HNGGG... MY GOD, WHAT...
YOU SHOULD BE REAL WORRIED.

MOTHER OF GOD, SOME STORY. ARE YOU SURE? I MEAN...
YOU'RE POSITIVE IT WASN'T YOU WHO...
SORRY, SILLY QUESTION. I GUESS SOMETHING LIKE THAT YOU WOULD KNOW ABOUT.
BUT LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, HE COULD'VE KILLED HER.
THE **BRIGHT** SIDE? HE POSES AS ME AND MAKES LOVE WITH KATHY...
I HAVEN'T MADE LOVE WITH KATHY YET! WE WAIT FOR THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE AND WHEN IT FINALLY HAPPENS I'M NOT EVEN THERE.
SHE'S STILL ALIVE, AIN'T SHE? SHE'S BEEN WRONGED, SHE'S BEEN VIOLATED, NOT YOU...
AND DON'T KID ME IT'S KATHY YOU'RE FEELING SORRY FOR BECAUSE WE BOTH KNOW IT ISN'T...
I KNOW, I KNOW, BUT...
BUT SHIT, YOU'RE JEALOUS. WHO CARES? THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO STOP GRENZER GETTING TO HER AGAIN.
AND KATHY MUST NEVER KNOW WHAT HAPPENED. IT'D DESTROY HER. YOU'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE AS GOOD A LOVER AS HE IS

AND MOST IMPORTANT, YOU'VE GOT TO STOP GRENZER. CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW *AWFUL* HE'D BE IF HE COULD DO ALL THE *WEIRD* SHIT YOU DO?
GOD, I LOOK TERRIBLE.
I DON'T KNOW HOW STRONG HE IS. HE TRICKED ME. I... I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW HE COULD BE ALIVE...
IF HE WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO BEAT YOU NOW HE'D DO IT. HE MIGHT BE CRAZY, BUT HE ISN'T STUPID.
HE'S WAITING 'TIL HE'S STRONG ENOUGH, AND IN THE MEANTIME HE'S TRYING TO MESS YOUR HEAD AROUND. SOFTEN YOU UP. IT'S OBVIOUS.
MAYBE THIS WHOLE THING WITH KATHY IS JUST TO *SCREW* YOU UP. THE MORE MESSY YOUR HEAD IS, THE EASIER IT'LL BE FOR HIM TO TAKE OVER.
IF HE KILLED HER YOU'D PROBABLY TEAR HIM TO PIECES. BUT SLEEP WITH HER AND YOU'D FALL APART...
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. BUT, GOD, THERE'S SO MUCH INSIDE ME. AND NOT JUST GRENZER.
TONIGHT, WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS GRENZER, I WAS STALKING THIS WOMAN...
I WAS FEELING THE HUNGER. I KNEW WHAT I WANTED TO DO TO THE WOMAN. THEN THE MADNESS STREAM CAME. WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF IT *HADN'T* COME?
GRENZER DIDN'T GIVE ME ALL THOSE FEELINGS. SOME OF THEM MUST HAVE BEEN THERE ALREADY...
HEY, JUST CONCENTRATE ON GETTING *RID* OF GRENZER, HUH? I'LL PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH A GOOD THERAPIST LATER. IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE TO PROTECT KATHY, OKAY?
DO YOU WANT SOME OF THIS OR WHAT?

YEAH. I'M STARTING TO DISSOLVE INTO YOU, COP.
I'LL TEAR YOU APART PIECE BY PIECE FROM THE INSIDES...
UHHRRR...
SAY, DONE A LITTLE MARTIAL ARTS IN OUR TIME, HAVE WE?
IS THIS WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, COP?
NO, GRENZER. IT ISN'T WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR...
WHAT YOU GOT THERE?
UHHHH!

I'LL GET YOU LATER, COP.
IF YOU'RE A COP...
IN A STORE SELLING ICE-COLD SODA AND GENUINE INDIAN JEWELRY, HE SMELLED THE PERFUME THAT FRANCES WORE...
HE'D DREAMT ABOUT FRANCES THE PREVIOUS NIGHT, THOUGH HE HADN'T SEEN HER IN FIVE YEARS...
ICE COLD POP
GENUINE NDIAN EWELRY FRAMICS
STUMBLING INTO THE ANGRY LIGHT, HE BLINKED BACK GHOSTS AND HEARD A PASSING MAN WHISPER THE NAME FRANCES...
OLD SANTE FE
...AND A BELL RANG IN THE NEARBY CATHEDRAL OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI...
AND HE BLUNDERED INTO AN ALLEY OF SHADOWS AND SAW TWO MEN AHEAD WHOSE HATS HE KNEW WOULD BE TALL AND WHITE...

WHAT'S THE MATTER? ONE MINUTE YOU'RE ON FIRE, THE NEXT YOU'RE A BLOCK OF ICE...
THINGS ON MY MIND, THAT'S ALL. I HAVE TO SEE STRINGER THIS MORNING.
IF THIS KILLER THING'S BEEN CLEARED UP, WHY DO YOU HAVE TO SEE HIM?
DID I SAY IT HAD BEEN CLEARED UP?
JESUS, SHADE, DON'T DO THIS TO ME. OF **COURSE** YOU DID. YOU SAID THE KILLER WAS A NUT WHO HERO-WORSHIPPED GRENZER.
YOU SAID HE'D BEEN SHOT DEAD. THAT IT WAS ALL OVER. TRUST ME, YOU SAID IT.
WELL, I WAS WRONG. IT'S NOT ALL OVER. YOU'RE STILL IN DANGER...
BREAKFAST, ANYONE?
BY THE WAY, SHADE, THERE'S SOMETHING ON THE WALL...
I THINK IT'S *NEW MEXICO*...

THE MADNESS STREAM. I CAN'T GO YET. THERE'S TOO MUCH HERE...
PLEASE, SHADE. I DON'T WANT TO STAY IN THIS CITY ANY LONGER. BAD THINGS ARE HAPPENING HERE.
IT'S GETTING WARMER ALREADY! CAN'T YOU FEEL IT?
WHERE'S LENNY? WE CAN'T GO WITHOUT LENNY!
DON'T WORRY, KATHY... I'VE GOT TO GET US BACK.
KATHY! KATHY, BE CAREFUL!
SHADE! THAT WOMAN! CALLING MY NAME...
CALLING HER **CHILD**. A **COINCIDENCE**.
HOLD MY HAND...

IT'S STILL HARD. IT PULLS ME TOWARDS IT.
BUT IT'S GETTING SO I CAN CONTROL THE STREAM NOW...
...CUT IT OFF. HEAL IT LIKE A WOUND...
SHADE, THERE'S ONLY *ONE* THING THAT COULD BE SO IMPORTANT YOU *WOULDN'T* FOLLOW THE STREAM, ESPECIALLY AFTER WHAT HAPPENED IN SAN FRANCISCO.
THE KILLER HASN'T BEEN *STOPPED*, HAS HE?
NO. NO, HE HASN'T.
IT'S GRENZER, ISN'T IT? TELL ME. SOMEHOW IT'S GRENZER. SOMEHOW I'M STILL NOT FREE OF HIM. *TELL* ME...
DON'T ASK ANY MORE QUESTIONS, KATHY. YOU MIGHT NOT LIKE THE ANSWERS.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
COME ON, HONEY. LET'S CATCH SOME AIR. IT'S GETTING A LITTLE HEAVY IN HERE...

NO. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HE *MEANT* BY THAT.
WHAT ANSWERS WOULDN'T I LIKE?
SHADE. DON'T JUST WALK OUT!
SHADE... WHAT'S *HAPPENING?*
STRINGER CAN WAIT.
THIS IS BETWEEN ME AND GRENZER.
WHEN I GET BACK TWENTY MINUTES LATER THE HOTEL ROOM IS EMPTY. NO NOTE. THEY'RE PROBABLY IN A BAR SOMEWHERE.

I PACE THE FLOOR. GRENZER COULD GET TO HER AGAIN. GRENZER COULD DO ANYTHING. LENNY'S RIGHT, I HAVE TO PROTECT KATHY.
NOW KATHY'S NOT HERE I CAN LOVE AND WANT HER AGAIN.
I TRY TO FIND OR SUMMON OR MAKE GRENZER BUT IT'S FUTILE, JUST A SERIES OF DUMMIES THAT ARE ME AND NOT HIM...
I HAVE TO FIND HIM BEFORE HE GETS TOO STRONG AND MY MIND GETS TOO CRACKED...
THROUGH THE TINIEST CRACKS THE THINGS I DON'T WANT TO SEE OR THINK ABOUT LEAK OUT, ESCAPE...
I TURN AS EACH SIGHING PHANTOM FALLS HUNGRILY INTO ANOTHER'S ARMS...
AND THEN I SEE THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE. I REMEMBER THEM FROM THE DEEP CULTURE TANK ON META.
META...
CLASSIC SHAKE
POE

SUDDENLY AND FOR THE FIRST TIME I FEEL LONELY FOR META. I FEEL ALONE, COLD, LOST.
TIMID AND SCARED. YEAH.
AND THEN I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO. I TOUCH THE BOOK FOR LUCK.
I THINK KATHY KEPT WHAT I NEED UNDER THE BED.
I FIND IT THERE, THE GUN I GOT FOR KATHY FROM STRINGER.
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO STOP ME AND YOU HAVEN'T GOT THE GUTS TO DO IT, SAID GRENZER.
I DON'T NEED GUTS. I'VE GOT BRAINS.
I MAKE KATHY SO I CAN FEEL GOOD ABOUT HER FOR A MOMENT IN A WAY I COULDN'T FEEL RIGHT NOW IF SHE WERE REAL.
I KNOW I'M A WRITHING MASS OF PETTINESS AND DEMONS AND JEALOUSIES, BUT WHAT CAN I DO?

NO. THIS IS NO GOOD. THIS COULD GET TOO CRAZY FOR WORDS.
THIS COULD GET BETTER THAN THE REAL THING.
I COULD END UP SLEEPING WITH HER.
I COULD END UP LIVING MY WHOLE LIFE WITH A PROJECTION OF MY OWN MIND FUELLED BY THE POWER OF MADNESS.
LIFT THE GUN. FEEL THE COLDNESS AGAINST THE TEMPLE.
CONCENTRATE. DO THIS RIGHT. NO MESSING UP, NOW. NO CRIES FOR HELP.
SCARED. TIMID.
SQUEEZE.
BMMM
NEXT: END OF VISION.

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
DC
SHADE THE CHANGING MAN
13
JUL 91
SHADE the Changing man
by milligan, bachalo & pennington
THEY WERE UNSELFISH
I Know You
McCARTHY

"YOU CAN'T IMAGINE
THE DEMONS INSIDE ME.
YOU CAN'T IMAGINE
MY LIFE."

AT FIRST YOU FIGHT. YOU KICK AND SCREAM AGAINST THE POWER-CUT THROWING ALL YOUR CITIES INTO DARKNESS...
THEN YOU SURRENDER, COLLAPSE INTO THE ARMS OF YOUR UTTER WEAKNESS.
AND EVEN AS YOUR BODY IS *FALLING*...
...YOU ARE *RISING*...
...EFFORTLESSLY, PAINLESSLY, WEIGHTLESSLY...
YOU CONCENTRATE. THIS IS IMPORTANT. EVERYTHING HANGS ON NOW.
BRICK BY BRICK, BAR BY BAR, CELL BY CELL...
THE MOMENT OF DEATH IS NO TIME TO LOSE YOUR HEAD.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUR MIND IS IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE LAST MOMENTS OF LIFE...
FOR THIS PLACE SHALL BE THE LANDSCAPE OF YOUR DEATH...
OR SO THEY SAY...
EDGE OF VISION
Part III
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ASSHOLE.
YOU **FELL** FOR IT.
I'VE **WON**...
I **WANTED** YOU TO COMMIT SUICIDE.
AT THE MOMENT OF YOUR DEATH I TAKE CONTROL OF THE BODY...
... JUST LIKE **YOU** TOOK CONTROL AT THE MOMENT OF **MY** DEATH ON THE **CHAIR**...
THERE'S A HOLE IN MY HEAD BUT I CAN FIX THAT. I CAN FIX ANY DAMN THING...
I'M STILL RUNNING ON **MADNESS**. STILL RIGGED UP TO THAT OLD BODY AND MADNESS VEST OF YOURS...
HEAR ME, SHADE? YOU SHOULD BE THANKFUL. I'VE SAVED YOUR LIFE.
THERE'LL BE A LITTLE PART OF YOU LIVING DEEP INSIDE ME THAT'S STILL LINKING ME TO THE VEST.
SHIT! I **PLANNED** IT THIS WAY!
IT'S SO RARE THAT SOMETHING HAPPENS **EXACTLY** LIKE **YOU** PLANNED IT!

OH BOY! I'VE GOT MY BODY BACK! ARE WE GOING TO HAVE US SOME GOOD TIMES NOW!
LOCK UP YOUR DAUGHTERS, CHICAGO!
HELL, THE WAY I FEEL YOU BETTER LOCK UP YOUR GRANMAS, TOO!
HEY, THAT'S BETTER. I HATE THE WAY YOUR FACE LOOKS, SHADE.
YOU KNOW, RECKON I MIGHT TRACK DOWN THAT FILLY OF YOURS. I MIGHT EVEN LET YOU WATCH WHEN I DO IT TO HER...
YOU DIDN'T GET TO SEE IT THE LAST TIME I DID IT TO HER, DID YOU.
NO.
I DIDN'T.
WHA...?
WHO... WHO'S THAT?
IT'S ME.
YOU? DON'T... DON'T BE STUPID. YOU'RE INSIDE ME...
MOTHER OF TEN BASTARDS...

WRONG, GRENZER.
YOU'RE INSIDE ME...
WE'RE BOTH INSIDE ME. THIS IS A PRISON. MY INNER CELLBLOCK.
NOT UNLIKE THE PLACE IN LOUISIANA WHERE YOU WERE EXECUTED.
BUT YOU'RE DEAD. I SAW YOU... I FELT YOU DIE!
A SHAM. A PERFORMANCE. THE ONLY WAY I COULD GET YOU WHERE I WANTED YOU.
I USED THE MADNESS TO CREATE A PERFECT COPY OF A SUICIDE. THE PAIN. FLOATING OUT OF MY BODY... I MADE IT ALL REAL...
IT HAD TO BE CONVINCING TO FOOL YOU. YOU BEING AN EXPERT ON DEATH.
EVEN MIMICKED MY OWN VERSION OF A NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE. I MADE THIS PLACE AS I DID SO...
THIS IS WHERE I GET RID OF YOU FOR GOOD, GRENZER.

I GOT THE IDEA OF A MISTAKEN SUICIDE FROM A STORY CALLED *ROMEO AND JULIET*.
IT DIDN'T TAKE A GENIUS TO WORK OUT THAT YOU *WANTED* ME TO KILL MYSELF.
NO! I DON'T WANT TO GO IN THERE. SOMETHING'S MOVING IN THERE...
SOMETHING WAITING FOR YOU, GRENZER. SOMETHING *PINING* FOR YOU...
I'M NOT *ENJOYING* THIS.
UNGGNNGGG
BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO.
OH MY GOD...
OH MAMA. MAMA HELP ME. MAMA I'M SORRY...

WELL, COME ON. DO IT! DO IT!
IT'LL BE WORTH DYING SO I CAN SEE YOUR SMART-ASS LIBERAL FACE *ENJOYING* IT. YEAH, *ENJOYING* IT...
WHAT'S WRONG, GOODY-GOODY? SECOND THOUGHTS?
DAMN! YOU CAN'T *DO* IT, CAN YOU?
AFTER ALL I'VE DONE TO YOU, YOU STILL CAN'T DO IT!
AHHHRAAAHAAARAAHH
MY GOD... THAT NOISE...
OH, THIS JUST GETS BETTER AND BETTER!
YOU GOT A *PRISON RIOT* ON YOUR HANDS, SHADE!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE... WHO... WHO ELSE IS DOWN HERE?
ALL THE *PRISONERS* YOU KEEP LOCKED UP. YOUR DEMONS, BAD BOYS, UGLY THOUGHTS, NASTY LEANINGS...
SEE YOU IN HELL, PARTNER.

SURE YOU DON'T WANT ME ALONG?
NAH. SHADE AND I HAVE TO WORK THIS OUT ALONE. GOD KNOWS WHAT'S WITH HIM THIS TIME...
MAYBE GUYS FROM HIS PLANET HAVE A REAL EARLY MALE MENOPAUSE OR SOMETHING...
SHADE THE CHANGE OF LIFE MAN. IT HAS A CERTAIN RING TO IT.
WE'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU HERE IN ABOUT AN HOUR.

SHADE...
SHADE, I'VE BEEN THINKING...
I THINK WE SHOULD GO OUR OWN WAYS. I MEAN, THERE'S SO MUCH WORKING AGAINST US.
IT'S BEEN FUN AND THAT BUT THERE'S TOO MUCH HISTORY.
AND I DON'T WANT TO GET SERIOUS YET. I'M THE KINDA GIRL WHO WILL NEVER SETTLE DOWN, YOU KNOW?
YOU'VE GOT YOUR WORK FIGHTING THE MADNESS AND I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT MY LIFE'S ALL ABOUT...
I CAN ONLY DO THAT ON MY OWN. I'LL KEEP IN TOUCH. MAYBE WHEN I'VE WORKED A FEW THINGS OUT OF MY SYSTEM WE CAN TRY AGAIN...
TAKE CARE, DARLING...

I HAVE TO STOP GRENZER. I MIGHT NOT KILL HIM BUT I HAVE TO BURY HIM DEEP, SO DEEP HE'LL NEVER GET OUT...
AHEAD I SEE THE CELLS. MY CELLS. I STOP FOR A MOMENT, TREMBLING.
FROM THE CELLS COME THE WHISPERS AND SHRIEKS AND QUESTIONS THAT LIVE AT THE EDGE OF HEARING...
NEVER QUITE HEARD BUT ALWAYS THERE...
AS I APPROACH THE CELLS I HEAR THE WORDS OF A POEM BY A POET WHOSE NAME I'VE FORGOTTEN.
"IT STAYS ON THE EDGE OF VISION, A SMALL UNFOCUSED BLUR..."
AND I KNOW THE CELLS WILL BE FULL...
OF ALL THAT HAS ALWAYS EXISTED ON THE EDGE OF MY VISION, THOSE PARTS OF ME GLIMPSED IN ODD NOCTURNAL MIRRORS...
THE CELLS SEEM EMPTY...
...BUT I KNOW, I KNOW THEY ARE FULL, OF ALL THAT IS JUST BELOW, JUST BEYOND, JUST OUT OF SIGHT AND HEARING...

NO, THE CELLS AREN'T EMPTY. AND FROM HERE I CAN SEE WHAT A *HYPOCRITE* I AM.
I'M MORE LIKE TROY THAN I ADMIT. WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS HIM AND WAS STALKING THAT WOMAN I WAS SO *HOT*...
I GET HOT WHEN I THINK OF KATHY SCREWING GRENZER. WHY DOES THAT MAKE US HOT, HUH? HOT AND SPICY HUMILIATION. YES! MY GOD, YES!
I GET HOT WHEN I LOOK AT SCHOOLGIRLS. HOW ABOUT THAT! COME ON, LET'S *ADMIT* IT...
SO THIS IS HOW IT IS... THE CELLS ARE WAITING FOR ME...
WHAT'S STOPPING US, HUH? WHAT'S STOPPING US DOING WHAT WE *REALLY* WANT TO DO?
WAITING FOR ME TO ENTER THEM. TO FREE WHATEVER'S INSIDE...
I GOT TOO CLOSE THAT TIME. GOT SUCKED IN. I MUST BLOCK IT ALL OUT...
PSST HEY, SHADE...
LOOK AT OUR *TEETH*, SHADE...
KEEP RUNNING. KEEP MOVING.
THEY'RE ALL FALLING OUT...
THEY'RE ALL FALLING OUT...

DAMN! A DEAD END! GRENZER'S LOST ME...
MAYBE I SHOULD'VE KILLED HIM WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE.
GRENZER?
HOW... HOW DID I GET... HERE...?
WHO CARES?
UGHHHHH!
MY EAR!
YOU'VE RIPPED MY EAR OFF!
THAT'S JUST FOR STARTERS, GRENZER. I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU FEEL AS SCARED AS THOSE WOMEN MUST HAVE FELT...
AND I'M GOING TO ENJOY IT...
UGGNNN... WHUU... WHUU...
I'M TEARING YOUR BOTTOM LIP OFF, GRENZER. THEN I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU SWALLOW IT...
OH GOD...

THIS IS HOW WE SHOULD DO IT. A BIT OF *SPLEEN*, FOR GOD'S SAKE.
LET'S GO CRAZY NOW AND THEN. LET'S *ENJOY* OUR WORK!
I GOT TOO CLOSE. I WAS INSIDE IT, FEELING IT ALL...
AND I THINK SOME OF IT'S ESCAPING. MAYBE I'VE SET IT FREE. THAT SPITE AND SPLEEN AND SADISM...
DEAL WITH IT LATER. THERE ARE FOOTSTEPS AHEAD. GRENZERS?
I HAVE TO BURY HIM AND GET OUT BEFORE TOO MUCH IS RELEASED.
I GO DEEPER. IT GETS DARKER.
I NO LONGER RECOGNIZE THE VOICES OR THE FEELINGS.
MAYBE THIS WASN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA AFTER ALL...
GRENZER?
CONFUSED, SHADE?
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE...
I JUST GOT MORE EXPERIENCE OPERATING ON THE *INSIDE* THAN YOU, SO I LED YOU *HERE*.
THESE AREN'T *YOUR* CELLS ANYMORE, THEY'RE *MINE*. THE SCABBY BITS OF ME THAT ARE LEFT INSIDE YOU...

AND THESE ARE *MY* BOYS...
YOU'RE GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT GOES ON INSIDE *ME*, MISTER CLEAN.
YOU CAN'T *IMAGINE* THE DEMONS INSIDE ME. YOU CAN'T *IMAGINE* MY LIFE. I'M A VOLCANO. I'M A NUCLEAR WARHEAD
OH, KEEPING THE CELLS SHUT. THAT'S SMART. BUT FOR HOW LONG, HUH?
THERE'S SO MUCH INSIDE ME, MAN. I'VE BEEN LIVING A NIGHTMARE ALL MY LIFE.
WHEN YOU LIVE A NIGHTMARE YOU LEARN THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE IS TO *WANT* IT AND *LIKE* IT...
UNTIL YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO *SHARE* IT...

IT'S NEW MEXICO SO THEY TAKE A *SIESTA*, PLAYING WAR-GAMES UNDER THE SHEET UNTIL DROWSY...
THE RADIO IS TUNED TO A SPANISH STATION BUT NEITHER OF THEM SPEAK SPANISH...
IF THEY DID THEY'D HEAR A VOICE SAYING:
THE COUPLE FROM NEW JERSEY LIE IN BED WITH GUTS FULL OF MARGARITAS...
THEY BARELY HEAR THE FOOTSTEPS PLODDING DAMPLY UP THE STAIRS.
DON'T STIR WHEN THOSE FOOTSTEPS HALT OUTSIDE THEIR DOOR...
THE DOOR OPENS. HE THINKS IT'S THE MAID. HE'S RATHER EXCITED...
THE MAID IS YOUNG AND HER DOWNY, BOYISH MOUSTACHE IS STRANGELY MOVING TO HIM...
HE IMAGINES HER EYES (SO DARK! SO DEEP! SO INNOCENT AND YET SO DIRTY!) SLITHERING ALL OVER THE EXPOSED PARTS OF HIS BODY.
HE'S WONDERING WHETHER HE MIGHT PRETEND TO ROLL OVER IN HIS SLEEP...
...AND REVEAL HIMSELF TO HER...
GEORGE CRUMPINGS?
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.

AH, KATHY? SHADE? YOU IN THERE?
YOU FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME OR WHAT?
EXIT
HOPE YOU'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING INDEC...
OH SHIT...
KATHY, WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE*?
EVEN *I* DON'T SHOOT THEM IN THE HEAD!
JEEZ... HE'S GLOWING...
SHADE... ARE YOU REALLY...?

OH MY. WELCOME TO THE PARTY, GORGEOUS.
SHADE? YOU'RE ALIVE?
YES, NOW GET AWAY FROM HIM. HE'S DANGEROUS.
THIS IS AMAZING. WHERE ARE WE? HOW DID WE GET HERE?
A LONG STORY. THIS IS WHERE GRENZER'S DEMONS ARE KEPT... HE'S TRYING TO RELEASE THEM. TO DESTROY ME...
I'M TRYING TO KEEP THEM LOCKED UP. IT'S A KIND OF STALEMATE...
YEAH, BUT I'M USED TO THIS DOING NOTHING FOR AGES.
SOON AS YOU GET BORED OR YOUR MIND WANDERS MY BOYS WILL BE ***OUT***.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HIS DEMONS? LIKE BLACK MAGIC?
NO. ALL THE STUFF THAT'S INSIDE HIM. ALL THE FEARS AND ANGERS AND PERVERSIONS AND BADNESS THAT DON'T COME TO THE SURFACE...
SHEESH. THEY MUST BE ***SOME DEMONS***. THE STUFF THAT'S ***ON*** THE SURFACE IS NOT EXACTLY ***ANGELIC***.
IS THERE A ***BATHROOM*** AROUND HERE?

WHENEVER I'M IN A SITUATION THAT SEEMS BEYOND MY EXPERIENCE I TRY TO ORIENT MYSELF BY FINDING A BATHROOM. BATHROOMS ARE GREAT LEVELERS, SHADE.
WHAT?
LENNY, THIS IS SERIOUS I MUSTN'T LET HIS DEMONS OUT...
WHY THE HELL NOT? THEY'RE *HIS* DEMONS, AREN'T THEY?
IF *ANYONE* SHOULD BE WORRIED IT SHOULD BE *HIM*, NOT US.
MY GOD. YOU'RE RIGHT.
OF COURSE I'M RIGHT.
AND *YOU'RE* RIGHT, TROY. I *CAN'T* IMAGINE WHAT'S INSIDE YOU.
WHAAAA?
NO...
AIEEEEE!

I HAVE TO SHUT THEM ALL OFF. CAGE THEM IN.. KEEP GRENZER DOWN HERE WHERE HE BELONGS.
GOD, THIS STUFF'S ACTUALLY *INSIDE* ME.
I DON'T KNOW HOW IT'S GOING TO AFFECT ME. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I RELEASED OF MY OWN.
THAT'S IT, THEN? WE'RE FINISHED HERE?
FOR NOW. MAYBE I'LL HAVE TO COME BACK IF THEY ESCAPE. I DON'T KNOW. I CAN'T SAY WHAT I MIGHT HAVE DISTURBED DOWN HERE.
THERE'S AN EXPRESSION. "PLAYING WITH FIRE"...
DO IT ALL THE TIME. SO HOW DO WE GET OUT OF THIS PLACE?
OH, THAT BIT'S EASY.
LIKE...
...THIS.
THE BLOOD'S GONE.
IT WAS ONLY PRETEND BLOOD. ANOTHER LONG STORY. WHERE'S KATHY?
SHIT! *KATHY!*

GET OFF ME, SHITBRAIN...
SHUT UP, YOU LITTLE TRAMP...
FERGUS, I CAUGHT THIS LADY TRYING TO LIFT MY GODDAMN WALLET.
HER AGAIN. SHE'S BEEN HANGING AROUND TWO DAYS NOW MOOCHING DRINKS AND MAKING A NUISANCE OF HERSELF...
MEN
CHUCK HER OUT, FERGUS. SHE'S LOWERING THE TONE OF THE PLACE.
PLEASE. JUST ONE MORE DRINK, PLEASE. THEN I'LL GO.
HAH HAH! YOU GOTTA ADMIT SHE'S GOT BALLS.
GIVE THE LADY WHAT SHE WANTS, FERGUS.
KATHY?
HUH?
SHE A FRIEND OF YOURS, BUDDY?
KATHY...
DON'T SEEM TOO HAPPY TO SEE YOU, DO SHE?

IT'S ALL FIXED. MY DAD'S TAKING HER IN.
I STILL DON'T GET IT. WHY SHOULD HE...?
IT'S NO BIG DEAL, SHADE. HE'S LOADED. I MEAN **LOADED**. I'M JUST A POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL, OKAY?
I LIVE IN A GROTTY STUDIO AND STEAL BUT ONE CALL TO DADDY WOULD GET ME AN UPPER EASTSIDE PENTHOUSE WITH A VIEW OF THE PARK...
I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY I'M A FAKE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING. THEY PUT ME IN A DEEP CULTURE TANK, BUT I THINK THEY MUST HAVE LEFT SOMETHING OUT.
THERE'RE OBVIOUSLY SOME THINGS YOU CAN'T LEARN FROM A CULTURE TANK, SHADE. EVEN A DEEP ONE.

YOU MUST HAVE PARENTS WHEREVER YOU COME FROM. IT CAN'T BE THAT DIFFERENT.
I WAS BROUGHT UP BY PROFESSIONAL PARENTEERS. MY BIOLOGICAL MOTHER AND FATHER FAILED THE *PARENT EXAM*.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
OH, IT'S SO TRITE AND CORNY. I'M AN ONLY CHILD. BOO HOO HOO. MOM DIED WHEN I WAS SIX. I LEFT HOME AS SOON AS I COULD.
I HATED ALL THAT RICH STUFF. THAT "YOU CAN HAVE WHATEVER YOU WANT" CRAP. I KNOW, THERE'RE PLENTY OF KIDS WHO'D SETTLE FOR SUCH A PROBLEM...
ANYHOW, DADDY'S JUST ***ACHING*** TO BUY ME THINGS AND PROVE THAT HE REALLY LOVES ME.
HE DOESN'T EXACTLY ***LIKE*** THE IDEA OF TAKING ONE OF MY FRIENDS AS A PATIENT, BUT HE'LL DO IT...
FACT IS HE'S OVER THE MOON THAT I'VE ASKED HIM FOR HELP. THAT I'VE ASKED HIM FOR *ANYTHING*.
AND THIS PLACE... IT'LL BE GOOD FOR HER?
IT'S ON THE LEVEL. DEALS MAINLY WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ASSOCIATED MENTAL PROBLEMS. IT DOESN'T GET MANY STARS BUT THEY'RE ALL ***VERY*** WEALTHY.
IT'S A KIND OF BETTY FORD CLINIC FOR THE RICH AND ANONYMOUS.

SHE'LL BE OKAY, SHADE. I'LL STAY AT THE CLINIC WHILE SHE'S THERE. I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER.
BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE TAKEN GOOD CARE OF ANYTHING.
GOD.
THIS HAS TO HAPPEN. SHE HAS TO GO THROUGH IT. SHE STILL HASN'T GOTTEN OVER HER PARENTS. YOU AND THIS MADNESS THING HAS JUST BEEN A *DIVERSION*.
IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION I THINK YOU'VE *HELPED*. SHE'S HAD TO FACE THINGS WITH YOU THAT MIGHT'VE TAKEN *YEARS* TO COME OUT OTHERWISE.
I SHOULD GO WITH YOU. STAY WITH HER. AT THE CLINIC.
IS THAT POSSIBLE? I MEAN, THIS MADNESS...
NO. NO, IT'S NOT POSSIBLE. I CAN ALREADY FEEL IT PULLING ME. I'VE GOT TO FIGHT AMERICA'S MADNESS.
BUT I DON'T REALLY *CARE* ABOUT AMERICA. ONLY KATHY...
SHE'S *AMERICAN*, ISN'T SHE?

AND YOU CAN VISIT WHENEVER YOU CAN.
YEAH. YOU'RE RIGHT. SHE'S AMERICAN.
SHE'S GOING TO *MAKE* IT. BUT *YOU* HAVE TO MAKE SURE THE *COUNTRY* MAKES IT.
THE *COUNTRY?* MY GOD. I'M A MESS, LENNY. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO HELP AN *ENTIRE COUNTRY?*
ONE DAY AT A TIME, I GUESS...
I'LL PHONE YOUR HOTEL WHEN WE GET TO THE CLINIC.
I DON'T THINK I'LL BE THERE.
NO. I WON'T BE THERE.
EXIT
I CAN FEEL IT ALREADY. IT'S LIKE PINS AND NEEDLES. THE MADNESS. CALLING ME.
I GO BACK TO MY HOTEL. I SIT IN THE DARK. I DON'T FEEL ANYTHING AT ALL. I SIT ON THE BED WAITING FOR THE MADNESS TO TAKE ME.
I DON'T FEEL ANYTHING AT ALL. THERE'S A RADIO PLAYING IN A NEARBY ROOM.
THERE'S A VOICE...
I THINK IT'S SPEAKING IN SPANISH...
NEXT: THE SANTA FE TRIAL

You don't have to be crazy to work here ...but it helps.

Cut off from his home and trapped in the body of a dead serial killer, the dimension-hopping Rac Shade has been reborn as Shade, the Changing Man — an unwilling conduit for the power of madness, pledged to combat the rising tide of Earth's insanity.

After surviving their first encounter with the burgeoning menace known as the American Scream, Shade and his companion Kathy find themselves drawn first to New York and then to San Francisco, where psychotic and psychedelic outbreaks threaten to unravel the very fabric of reality. But even as they work to contain the damage, an even deadlier enemy is gathering strength — and it's closer than either of them can imagine.

As one of the founding titles of the VERTIGO imprint, SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN exploded all the preconceptions of what a super-hero comic could be and launched the now-legendary careers of writer ***Peter Milligan*** *(HUMAN TARGET, GREEK STREET,* X-Force*) and artist* ***Chris Bachalo*** *(DEATH: THE HIGH COST OF LIVING, STEAMPUNK,* Excalibur*). EDGE OF VISION collects issues 7-13 of this long-demanded series and continues to explore the remarkable, hallucinatory world that it brought to life.*

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suggested for mature readers
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